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ROMA SOTTERRANEA.

Ballantyne Press
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EDINBURGH AND LONDON

ROMA SOTTERRANEA

OR

AN ACCOUNT OF THE ROMAN CATACOMBS

ESPECIALLY OF THE

CEMETERY OF ST. CALLIXTUS

COMPILED FROM THE WORKS OF COMMENDATORE DE ROSSI WITH THE CONSENT OF THE AUTHOR

New Edition, Rewritten and Greatly Enlarged

BY

REV. J. SPENCER NORTHCOTE, D.D.

CANON OF BIRMINGHAM

AND

REV. W. R. BROWNLOW, M.A.

CANON OF PLYMOUTH

"Vix fama nota est, abditis
Quam plena sanctis Roma sit,
Quam dives urbanum solum
Sacris sepulchris floreat."
—PRUDENTIUS.

PART FIRST: HISTORY

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1879

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PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

—o—

In the Preface to the first edition of this work, published in 1869, we said—

"The interest which the Roman Catacombs have excited in the minds of our countrymen, especially of those who have visited the Eternal City, has long made us wish to present them with that most full and accurate information upon the subject which is contained in the 'ROMA SOTTERRANEA' of De Rossi.

"Two courses were open to us; either to bring out a translation from the Italian original, or to embody in a work of our own the most interesting and important facts which those volumes contain. The first would have been incomparably the easier, and in some respects the more satisfactory, course. But the size and cost of such a work would have put it entirely beyond the reach of many whom we were most anxious to benefit. We therefore decided on the plan adopted in the volume which we now introduce to our readers, and which, we believe, will be found to contain as fair a summary as its dimensions would allow—not only of De Rossi's two volumes of '*Roma Sotterranea*,' published in 1864 and 1867, but also of many articles in his bi-monthly '*Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*,' of papers read by him before learned societies in Rome and elsewhere, and of his occasional contributions to works published by others, such as the '*Spicilegium Solesmense*' of Cardinal Pitra, &c."

Our plan seemed to be generally approved; for the edition was soon exhausted in England, and translations were made both in France and Germany. This second edition therefore has been prepared upon the same principles. The arrangement of some part of the matter has been slightly changed, and great additions have been made by incorporating the substance of the third and most important volume of De Rossi's work, which appeared in 1877. Moreover, two defects have been supplied, which were apologised for in the Preface to the

first edition. Copious references have been given in the margin to the several portions of De Rossi's works in which each statement in the text can be found; and, secondly, the Inscriptions of the Catacombs have been treated in a separate book, printed uniformly with this, and intended to form the third volume of this second edition of our "*Roma Sotterranea.*"

The second volume (which is nearly ready) will be devoted to the subject of early Christian Art; whilst the present volume deals only with the history of the Catacombs generally, and a description of the Cemetery of Callixtus in particular. This matter, which filled about 250 pages of our first edition, now fills 500; and the greater portion of the additional matter is as interesting and important as it is new. We would call the special attention of our readers to the first two Chapters of Book II., Chapters iv.–viii. of Book III., Chapters v.–vii. of Book IV., and Chapter iii. of Book V.

The value of a work of this kind depends on the fidelity with which it reproduces the statements and proofs of the original which it professes to abridge; and the excellence of this abridgment on this score has been generally acknowledged by all competent judges, *e.g.*, by the writers in Smith's "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities." A later English author, however, on the same subject, has more than once preferred the opposite charge against us, though he has never ventured to set before his readers the original texts of De Rossi which he accuses us of having misrepresented. We think, therefore, that we may be excused if we insert here the testimony of De Rossi himself, contained in a letter which he prefixed to the French translation of our work.

ROME, *May 25th*, 1872.

The publication of the immortal volume entitled "*Roma Sotterranea*" by my great predecessor, Antonio Bosio, was followed by a whole series of abridged editions and of translations into various languages. It was translated into Latin at full length, and even amplified in two volumes, three times published, in Rome (1651), at Cologne, and at Paris (1659). As early as 1650, it had been

reprinted in its original language, but reduced to smaller proportions. The same need soon made itself felt with regard to the Latin translation; this also was abridged, and gave rise to the publication of a "*Roma Subterranea Portatilis.*" This little volume, which in our day has become a bibliographical curiosity, is adorned with plates reduced to less than a tenth of the designs in the gigantic original. It issued from the press of Arnheim in 1671. It had been preceded by a German edition, executed in similar proportions by the same printer.

The little German "*Roma Sotterranea*" had the honour of a second edition at Amsterdam at the very time when the Latin "*Roma Subterranea Portatilis*" appeared. Thus, in the space of less than forty years, Bosio's "*Roma Sotterranea*" came out eight successive times, in Italian, in Latin, and in German. This rich series of editions, of translations, and of abridgments of so serious a work bear witness, not only to its extreme value, but also to the needs of the age which gave it such a welcome. The desire to have new light thrown on the beginnings of Christianity was then felt both in the interests of science and of religion. As the fruit of a whole life devoted to researches into those beginnings, and into the monuments which they have left in the bowels of the earth at Rome, the "*Roma Sotterranea*" of the seventeenth century presented itself to the public with the authority of the most consummate learning and of the most scrupulous honesty. Sincere minds, eager for knowledge and truth, received from it a sort of revelation; it discovered to them luminous pages of history and of archæology hitherto unstudied and altogether unknown.

I have resumed, after the lapse of two hundred and fifty years, the work of Bosio; to remodel it by the assistance of the lights accumulated by more than two centuries of historical, critical, and archæological research, and to give to the public the magnificent result of new discoveries. The best reward that I could desire was to see my work welcomed with the same eagerness and confidence as that of my venerated and immortal predecessor. My desire has been realised beyond my hopes. Eight years have scarcely elapsed since the appearance of the first volume of my work, and four since that of the second volume: yet, notwithstanding the disasters which have convulsed Europe and the Church during that short period of memorable years, a first edition richly adorned with costly plates has been reprinted, and a whole series of abridgments in English, French, and German has been undertaken by serious-minded men, capable of interpreting my meaning and of adding to it the result of their own reflection and study.

At the very time that I am writing these lines, several books of this kind, prepared during a gigantic war, come before the public, on the very morrow of the peace, in France and Germany. I have had executed under my own superintendence the Atlas of chromolithographic plates which adorn the "*Rome Souterraine*" published in France by M. Paul Allard; and I am anxious to give a public testimony of my great gratitude and sympathy to an author, whom neither the unparalleled disasters of his country nor the gloomy perspective of the future could deter from a difficult literary undertaking, which would have seemed to be reserved for better times. I should wish to find words capable of stirring up those who are able to understand the deep interest of serious historical researches and their influence on the culture of Christian nations; I should wish to assist in obtaining the reward due to so much devotedness to the cause of science and truth. But I am not eloquent; all my art as a writer consists in the clear, simple, and truthful expression of what I think, know, and believe. Instead, then, of engaging in general reflections, I will limit myself to expressing in all simplicity what I think of this volume, which I wish myself to present to the public.

I did the same thing, two years ago, for the book of my learned friend, Count Desbassayns de Richemont, entitled "*Nouvelles Études sur les Catacombes Romaines.*" Soon after its publication the war broke out, which would have stifled it in its birth, if its merit had not saved it. It has just received the honour of a translation in Germany, which appears to me, under existing circumstances, a striking proof of the intrinsic value of the work. M. de Richemont's book is in no sense an abridgment of my "*Roma Sotterranea;*" it is even destitute of all drawings of the monuments. It is a synthetic statement of my studies, of those of the author, and of the actual state of science on the subject of the primitive monuments of Christianity; a statement full of pith and originality. It occupies a place distinct from that of the abridged "*Rome Souterraine;*" it may be very profitably read even by those who have been initiated into the attractive study of the Catacombs by the handsome volume, adorned with plates and designs, which I am at this moment recommending.

The work of the English authors of the abridged "*Roma Sotterranea,*" their merits, their plan, and the share of novelty which belongs to the French edition, have been pointed out with equal sincerity and modesty in the Introduction to this volume. I will only add, that, at this moment, a book of precisely similar character is beginning to come out in Germany. Professor Kräus,

whose learning in the matter of Christian antiquities is well known, has in his turn translated the English authors' book into German, enlarging and modifying it according to his own taste and that of his fellow-countrymen. But this edition is not adorned with coloured plates, like those of London and Paris. Thus each of the three great nations of Europe will have an abridgment of my Italian work in its own tongue ; and each abridgment has been composed, modified, and published in the way best suited to the needs and taste of the country to which it is addressed. The direct share which I have been able to take in the edition of the French abridgment authorises me to adopt it in a special way, and to recognise it as the expression of my ideas in the measure which I am going to explain. I must neither appropriate to myself what does not belong to me, nor, in what may belong to me, own a responsibility which the learned English and French authors in their discreet reserve do not lay upon me.

The plan of the abridged "*Roma Sotterranea*," as adopted by its principal author, my old friend, Dr. Northcote, and by his fellow-labourer, Rev. W. R. Brownlow, differs essentially from that of the epitomes of Bosio and of his Latin translator, Aringhi, published in the seventeenth century. These were scarcely more than incomplete reproductions, more or less mutilated and reduced, of the principal work, following the exact order of its books and chapters, and repeating almost *verbatim* the words of the author. The two English authors, thoroughly at home with their subject, knowing the places and monuments from having seen them and studied them in all their details, have remodelled my work, without subjecting themselves to a servile imitation of its arrangement ; they have even augmented it by matter borrowed from my "*Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*," from the works of other archæologists, and from their personal studies. They have thus made of it a new and partly an original book. I will make special mention of the rich and complete *résumé* which we owe to Dr. Northcote of what I have written in different places, and often rather hinted at than developed, on the lawfulness of Christian burial-places during the ages of persecution. I will name also in the same way, and as drawn in some parts from sources foreign to my works, Mr. Brownlow's fine chapters on Christian glasses and sarcophagi. M. Allard in his turn has followed the same line ; he has on many points developed subjects of which the first authors had merely given a sketch, and has especially added in their respective places the indications of new discoveries announced in my "*Bullettino*" since the publication of the English volume. Notwithstanding

so many remodellings of my ideas and of my manner of presenting and expressing them, notwithstanding the additions borrowed from foreign sources, these faithful and intelligent interpreters have managed to condense the subject of my work in their pages without deteriorating it; they have succeeded in the most delicate and difficult of literary undertakings, having, so to speak, identified themselves with an author whom they have, nevertheless, transformed at their pleasure and with great freedom. I have made a list of the slight inaccuracies which an attentive examination of the French "*Rome Souterraine*" has brought under my notice; they are the best testimony to the general exactness, both with regard to the substance of facts and the value to be attached to them, which reigns in these pages, compiled with so much learning.

This simple declaration is sufficient to show that recourse must be had to my original work by such readers as may wish to know the whole force of an argument, and especially the delicate and sometimes almost imperceptible shades which separate that which is of the substance of an argument from that which is merely accessory, that which I put forward as solid and certain, and that which I give as probable or likely, or simply as matter of conjecture. Even the most skilful intelligence, and one in most complete sympathy with my own, would find it impossible to sum up and abridge the mass of proofs of different kinds and their mutual corroboration. M. Allard acknowledges this in his Introduction, in his own name and in that of the English authors. I thank them for this delicate acknowledgment, which has been dictated by their intimate knowledge of the subject and by their scientific honesty.

I may be allowed to conclude by declaring that I consider this honesty and scrupulous severity in the proving of facts as the first duty of any writer who handles a subject so likely to raise religious controversy as that of the early Christian monuments. I hope that my best title to the esteem and sympathy with which I am honoured by the most competent and impartial judges is the confidence with which I have inspired them by thirty years of assiduous explorations and researches, and by a complete and conscientious account of all that they have brought to light.

I lay down my pen, full of confidence in the brilliant success which the importance of the matter and the talent of the author ensure for this book. It will prove to be its own recommendation far more than any words and testimony of mine.

J. B. De Rossi.

Of "the slight inaccuracies" which De Rossi was good enough to point out, several are mere typographical errors of the French printer; three are errors of description, 'marble' instead of 'porphyry,' 'Basilica' instead of 'Baptistery,' &c.; one or two are 'slight inaccuracies' of date. The most important is the retractation by De Rossi of his former deductions from the anniversary of St. Anteros, which he now considers to be insufficiently supported. With this exception, there is not one which affects the substance of the work. Indeed, the only error of any real scientific or religious importance, which has ever come to our knowledge, was pointed out by the late Rev. Wharton Marriott as soon as our work appeared, and found no place, therefore, even in the first edition of M. Allard's translation.

We need hardly add that all M. De Rossi's corrections have been carefully attended to in this edition, and no pains have been spared, even by frequent reference to De Rossi himself whilst the work has been going through the press, to ensure as high a degree of accuracy as possible.

Fest. S. Damasi, 1878.

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	257	SIXTUS II. ...	*Sep. in cœm. Callixti. Diaconi sep. in cœm. Prætextati. B. Laurentius, in cœm. Cyriacæ Via Tiburt.*	150, 302, 151, 140
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AURELIAN. *9th Persec.*	269–275	FELIX I. ...	*Constituit supra sepulchra martyrum Missas celebrari. Fecit basilicam in Via Aurelia ubi sep. mil. 2 ab urbe.*	241
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GALERIUS. *10th Persec.*	303–309	MARCELLUS ...	*Fecit cœm. Via Salaria, et 25 titulos in urbe constituit . . . propter sepulturas Martyrum. Sep. in cœm. Priscillæ.*	157, 158, 343
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	418–422	BONIFACE I. ...	*Habitavit in cœm. S. Felicitatis M. Via Salaria, ubi fecit oratorium et ornavit. Ubi sep.*	251
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JUSTINIAN I. (East)	560–573	JOHN III. ...	*Ornavit et restauravit cœmeteria SS. MM., et constituit ut oblationes, &c. in eisdem cœm. per omnes Dominicas de Lateranis ministrarentur. Habitavit in cœm. SS. Tiburtii et Valeriani.**	254, 259
MAURICE (East) ...	577–590	PELAGIUS II. ...	*Fecit cœm. B. Hermetis M., et basilicam supra corp. B. Laurentii a fundamento.**	—
AGILULPH (Lombard.)	590–604	GREGORY I. ...	*Sepultus est in Basilica Beati Petri Apostoli.* [As also were all those marked **.]	255
PHOCAS (East) ...	608–615	BONIFACE IV. ...	*In Pantheo fecit Ecclesiam S. Mariæ et omnium MM.**	261

HERACLIUS (East) ...	617–625	BONIFACE V. ...	*Perfecit cœm. Nicomedis, et dedicavit illud. Constituit ut Acolytus non præsumat reliquias SS. MM. levare nisi presbyter.*	—
	625–639	HONORIUS I. ...	*Fecit a solo Ecclesiam S. Agnetis Via Nomentana. Renovavit cœm. BB. MM. Marcellini et Petri et multa alia.**	
CONSTANS II. (East)	642–649	THEODORE ...	*Adduxit in urbem corpora SS. Primi et Feliciani in arenario sepulta Via Nomentana.**	259[1]
	683–684	LEO II.	*Recondidit corpora SS. Simplicii, Faustini, et Beatricis, &c., in Ecclesia juxta S. Bibianam in urbe.**	189, 259
JUSTINIAN II. (East)	687–701	SERGIUS I. ...	*Presbyter impigré per cœm. diversa missarum sollennia celebrabat. Multas basilicas renovavit.**	255
	705–708	JOHN VII. ...	*Laboravit in cœm. BB. MM. Marcellini et Marci et S. Damasi, &c.**	—
LEO THE ISAURIAN (East)	715–731	GREGORY II. ...	*Monasteria secus basilicam S. Pauli innovavit* [et in aliis locis].*	
LIUTPRAND (Lombardy)	731–741	GREGORY III. ...	*Instituit in cœm. S. Petronillæ stationem, et ut in cœm. circumquaque positis oblationes de patriarchio deportarentur ad celeb. missas.**	186
	741–751	ZACHARIAS ...	*Multa loca Sanctorum in meliorem statum perduxit.*	
ASTOLPHO (Lombard)	752–757	STEPHEN III. ...	*Restauravit tegumen cœmeterii S. Soteridis, quod ceciderat** ...	349
PEPIN (France) ...	757–767	PAUL I.	*Corpora innumerabilium SS. de cœmeteriis dirutis infra civitatem recondidit.**	259, 260
CHARLEMAGNE (West)	772–795	ADRIAN I. ...	*Cœm. BB. Petri et Marcellini una cum cœteris cœm. SS. renovavit. Omnes ecclesias Dei tam extra quam infra muros renovavit.**	386, 260
	795–816	LEO III. ...	*Decoravit cœm. S. Sixti Via Appia, sepulchrum B. Sebastiani ad Catacumbas, &c. Construxit noviter in loco superiore Ecclesiam SS. Nerei et Achillei.**	186, 260, 361
LOUIS I. (West) ...	817–824	PASCHAL I. ...	*Multa corpora SS. intra civitatem recondidit. Corpus S. Cæciliæ reperit.**	260, 320
LOTHAIRE (France) ...	844–847	SERGIUS II. ...	*In Ecclesia SS. Silvestri et Martini collocavit B. Silvestri corpus cum SS. Fabiano, &c.**	260
CHARLES THE BALD (France)	847–858	LEO IV.	*Multa corpora SS. infra urbis mœnia congregavit. Multas basilicas decoravit.**	260
LOUIS (German) ...	858–866	NICHOLAS I. ...	[*Assidué SS. ecclesias ac cœmeteria circuibat.*] *Renovavit cœm. Via Portuensi S. Felicis, et ad ursum pileatum, et de cœm. S. Sebastiani Via Appia fecit monasterium.**	261

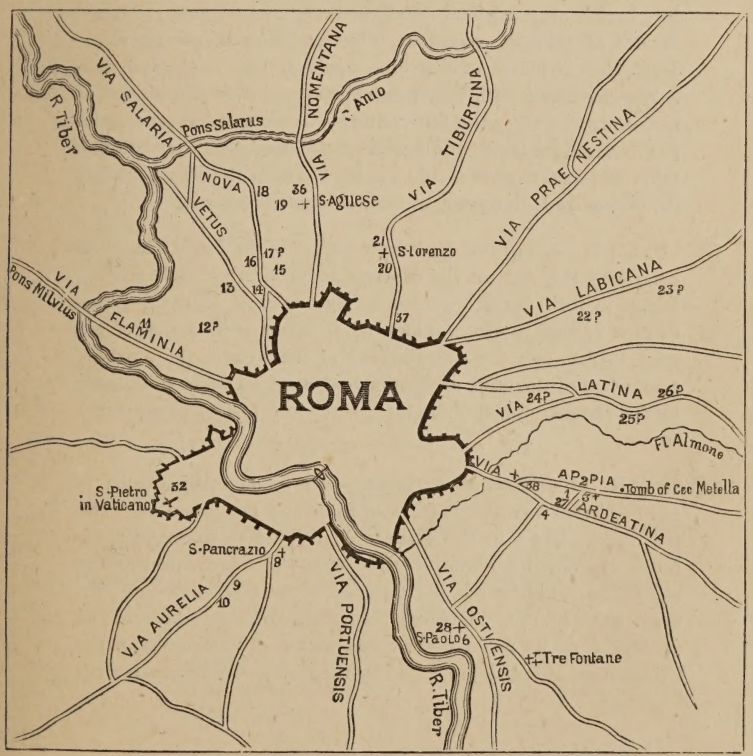
[1] These martyrs were buried at Nomentum. See page 384.

LIST OF CEMETERIES MENTIONED IN ANCIENT HISTORICAL RECORDS ON THE VARIOUS ROADS.

ROADS.	GREATER CEMETERIES.		LESSER CEMETERIES; Or, Isolated Tombs of Martyrs.	CEMETERIES Constructed after the Peace of the Church.
	Primitive Names.	Names in 4th Century, Time of Peace.		
APPIA, . .	1. Callisti { Lucinæ, Zephyrini, Callisti, Hippolyti, .	S. Xysti. S. Cæciliæ. SS. Xysti et Cornelii.	27. Soteridis.	
	2. Prætextati, . .	S. Januarii. SS. Urbani, Felicissimi, Agapiti, Januarii, et Quirini. SS. Tiburtii, Valeriani, et Maximi.		
	3. Ad Catacumbas, .	S. Sebastiani.		
ARDEATINA,	4. Domitillæ, . .	S. Petronillæ. SS. Petronillæ, Nerei, et Achillei.		38. Balbinæ sive S. Marci.
	5. Basilei, . . .	SS. Marci et Marcelliani.		39. Damasi.
OSTIENSIS, .	6. Commodillæ, . .	SS. Felicis et Adaucti.	28. Sepulcrum Pauli Apostoli in prædio Lucinæ. 29. Cœmeterium Timothei in horto Theonis. 30. Ecclesia S. Theclæ. 31. Ecclesia S. Zenonis.	
PORTVENSIS,	7. Pontiani ad ursum pileatum, . .	SS. Abdon et Sennen. S. Anastasii, pp. S. Innocentii, pp.		40. Julii via Portuensi, mill. iii., S. Felicis via Portuensi.
AURELIA, .	8.	S. Pancratii.		
	9. Lucinæ, . . .	SS. Processi et Martiniani. S. Agathæ ad Girulum.		41. S. Felicis via Aurelia.
	10. Calepodii, . .	S. Callisti via Aurelia. Julii via Aurelia.		
CORNELIA, .			32. Memoria Petri Apostoli et sepulturæ episcoporum in Vaticano.	
FLAMINIA, .	11.	S. Valentini.		
CLIVUS CUCUMERIS,	12. Ad Septem Columbas,	Ad caput S. Joannis.		
SALARIA VETUS,	13. Basillæ, . . .	S. Hermetis. SS. Hermetis, Basillæ, Proti, et Hyacinthi.		
	14.	S. Pamphyli.		
SALARIA NOVA,	15. Maximi, . . .	S. Felicitatis.	33. Ecclesia S. Hilariæ in horto ejusdem. 34. Crypta SS. Chrysanti et Dariæ.	
	16. Thrasonis, . .	S. Saturnini.	35. Cœmeterium Novellæ.	
	17. Jordanorum, . .	S. Alexandri. SS. Alexandri, Vitalis et Martialis et VII. Virginum.		
	18. Priscillæ, . .	S. Silvestri. S. Marcelli.		

LIST OF CEMETERIES—*Continued.*

ROADS.	GREATER CEMETERIES.		LESSER CEMETERIES; Or, Isolated Tombs of Martyrs.	CEMETERIES Constructed after the Peace of the Church.
	Primitive Names.	Names in 4th Century, Time of Peace.		
NOMENTANA,	19. Ostrianum vel Ostriani, . . .	Cœmeterium majus. Ad Nymphas S Petri. Fontis S. Petri.	36. Cœmeterium S. Agnetis in ejusdem agello. 37. Cœmeterium S. Nicomedis.	
TIBURTINA,	20.	S. Hippolyti.		
	21. Cyriacæ, . . .	S. Laurentii.		
LABICANA, .	22. Ad Duas Lauros, .	S. Gorgonii. SS. Petri et Marcellini. S. Tiburtii.		42. In Comitatu sive SS. Quatuor Coronatorum.
	23	S. Castuli.		
LATINA, .	24.	S. Gordiani. SS. Gordiani et Epimachi. SS. Simplicii et Serviliani, Quarti et Quinti, et Sophiæ.		
	25.	S Tertullini.		
	26. Aproniani, . .	S. Eugeniæ.		



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PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BOOK I.

INTRODUCTORY.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND OUTLINE OF HISTORY.

The Catacombs excavated in the hills round Rome; of immense extent—More than forty in number, but not united—Named after the owners of the soil or the martyrs buried in them, or some local peculiarity—Not sandpits or quarries, but made for burial of Christians—Called cemeteries—Other names—Names of galleries, chambers, different kinds of graves, &c.—Used also as places of worship—Made at first freely and publicly—Interfered with in times of persecution—Abandoned as burial-places early in the fifth century—Ornamented as sanctuaries—Plundered by Goths and Lombards—Consequent translation of relics and final neglect of the Catacombs after the eighth century—Some records, however, of their contents preserved.

The Roman Catacombs.

THE daily increasing celebrity of the Roman Catacombs might almost seem to render a general description of them unnecessary; for who does not know, if not by personal observation, at least from the accounts of friends or from popular literature, the leading features of that marvellous city of the dead which has received the appropriate name of *Roma Sotterranea*—subterranean Rome? Nevertheless, so many errors are often mixed up with these popular accounts, and our knowledge of the subject has been so much improved of late, both in point of accuracy and of extent, that it will conduce to

clearness and the general convenience of our readers if we begin by setting before them some outline of what is contained in the following pages. We shall make our statement as concise as possible, not strengthening it at present by full proofs or arguments, but leaving these to be supplied when we come to fill in the several parts of the picture in detail.

Their position and extent.

The Roman Catacombs — as this subterranean world is usually called—are a vast labyrinth of galleries excavated in the bowels of the earth in the hills around the Eternal City; not in the hills on which the city itself was built, but in those beyond the walls. Their extent is enormous, not as to the amount of superficial soil which they underlie, so much as in the actual length of their galleries; for these are often excavated on various levels, or *piani*, three, four, or even five, one above the other; and they cross and recross one another, often at short intervals, on each of these levels, so that the whole soil is as it were honeycombed by them; and it has been calculated by competent authorities, that if stretched out in one continuous line, they would extend more than 350 miles, *i.e.*, more than the whole length of Italy itself. There is no truth, however, in the foolish stories which are sometimes told, that the Catacombs form one uninterrupted network of subterranean paths, extending under a considerable portion of the Roman Campagna, penetrating even into the heart of the city on the one side, and reaching to the sea on the other. Each cemetery was originally of very limited extent; and though at later periods some were joined together, still a deep valley was always sufficient to keep apart the systems of excavation even of two adjacent hills, for the lowest or connecting galleries would soon have become mere subterranean canals. Moreover, all the Roman Catacombs properly so called, *i.e.*, all that were used for the burial of the inhabitants of Rome itself, lie within a radius of three miles from the old walls of the city, we mean the walls of Servius Tullius. Similar excavations have been found at greater distances from the city, but these were the

cemeteries of small towns or villages once existing there, but which have since perished.

The subterranean galleries are narrow, ranging from two to four feet perhaps, and they vary in height according to the nature of the rock in which they are dug, but rarely exceed eight or ten feet. The walls on both sides are pierced with horizontal niches, flat oblong compartments, like shelves in a bookcase or berths in a steamer, and every niche was made to contain one or more dead bodies. General appearance.

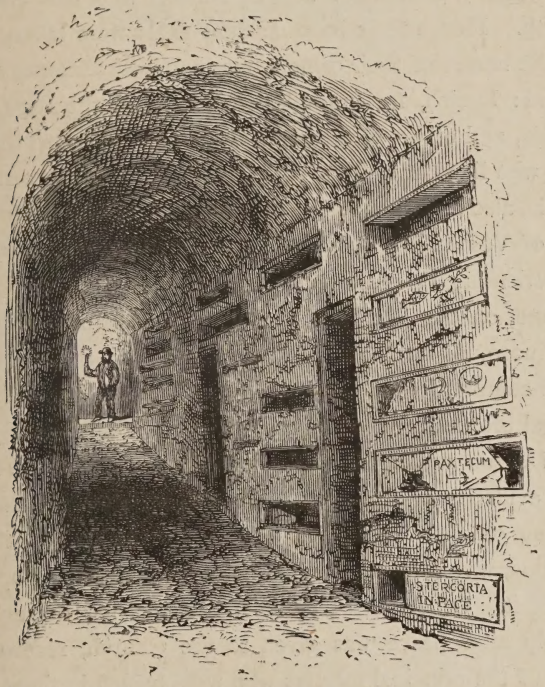

FIG. 1.—*Gallery with Tombs.*

These vast excavations once formed the ancient Christian cemeteries of Rome; they were begun in apostolic times, and continued to be used as burial-places of the faithful till peace was given to the Church; and even after this time, though the practice of burying *sub dio* then became more common, yet the Number and names.

Catacombs were still used for the same purpose in some degree till the capture of the city by Alaric in the year 410, but not later. In the third century, the Roman Church numbered twenty-five or twenty-six of them, corresponding to the number of her *titles*, or parishes, within the city; and besides these, we know of about twenty others, of smaller dimensions, which may have existed at the same time perhaps, but were the private property of this or that family. It is probable that originally they all belonged to private families or individuals, being dug in the villas or gardens of wealthy citizens who had embraced the faith. Hence their most ancient titles were taken merely from the names of their owners, many of which names are still retained: Lucina, for example, who lived in the days of the Apostles, and others of the same family, or at least of the same name, who lived at various periods in the next two centuries; Priscilla, also a contemporary of the Apostles; Flavia Domitilla niece of Vespasian; Commodilla, whose property lay on the Via Ostiensis; Prætextatus, on the Via Appia; Pontian and Generosa, on the Via Portuensis; and the Jordani, Maximus, and Thraso, all on the Via Salaria Nova. At the end of the second century, if not before, some of the cemeteries became the legal property of the Church, and were administered by the chief Deacon under the authority of the Bishop. We have direct evidence of this with reference to the Catacomb of St. Callixtus on the Via Appia. Another cemetery, on the Via Ardeatina, was known by the name of St. Mark, the Pope who founded it. Others again, either from their first beginning, or certainly after peace was given to the Church, received the names of the principal martyrs who were buried in them, as St. Hermes, on the Via Salaria Vetus; and, lastly, some seem to have been always known by the peculiarity of their position, as *ad Catacumbas* on the Via Appia, *ad ursum pileatum* and *ad Sextum Philippi* on the Via Portuensis, *ad Septem Columbas* and *ad Clivum Cucumeris* on the old Via Salaria, and *ad duas Lauros* on the Via Labicana.

It has always been agreed among men of learning who have personally examined these excavations, that they were used Origin and purpose.

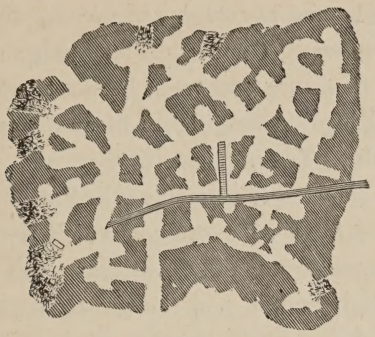

FIG. 2.—*Plan of Arenaria at St. Agnes'.*

exclusively by the Christians as places of burial and of holding religious assemblies. Modern research has now placed it beyond a doubt, that they were also for the most part designed for this

FIG. 3.—*Part of Catacomb of St. Agnes'.*

purpose and for no other; that they were not deserted sand pits (*arenariæ*) or quarries adapted to Christian uses, but

a development, with important modifications, of a form of sepulchre not altogether unknown even among the heathen families of Rome, and in common use among the Jews both in Rome and elsewhere. Our readers may judge for themselves, even from the miniature specimens here set before them, how easy it is to distinguish the galleries of an *arenaria* from those of a Catacomb. These plans (Figs. 2 and 3) represent a portion of the cemetery, commonly called of St. Agnes, on the Via Nomentana, and of a sandpit which lies over it (both drawn to the same scale); and the greater width of the passages excavated in the sandpit, and the greater regularity of those in the Catacomb, are characteristics which at once arrest the attention, and suffice to impress upon our minds the essential difference between them.

Called by various names.

These burial-places were not known in ancient times by the name of Catacombs, but cemeteries or sleeping-places; a new name of Christian origin, or rather an old name with a new meaning, which the Pagans, therefore, could only repeat, probably without understanding.[1] The word applied equally of course to all places of Christian burial, whether subterranean or not, and in some instances, *e.g.*, in Greece and in Asia, it was used as the name of each separate tomb. In Africa, the same idea found expression in a Latin form, *accubitorium; e.g.*,

R.S., iii. 428.

IN MEMORIA EORUM
QUORUM CORPORA IN AC
CUBITORIO HOC SEPULTA
SUNT ALCIMI CARITATIS JULIANÆ
ET ROGATÆ MATRI VICTORIS PRESBYTE
RI QUI HUNC LOCUM CUNCTIS FRATRIBUS FECI.[2]

"In memory of those whose bodies have been buried in this cemetery, Alcimus, Caritas, Juliana, and Rogata, mother of Victor the priest, who made this place for all the brethren."

Cubiculum is another word also inspired by the same funda-

[1] The imperial edicts therefore spoke of "those places which are called cemeteries."—*Euseb. H. E.*, vii. 13. See also St. Chrysostom, Hom. in Cœmet. Appell.

[2] Renier Inscr. de l'Alger., No. 4026.

mental idea, and it was used both of the separate chambers in the Catacombs, and of sepulchral monuments above ground; and *cubile* is the name given by Prudentius to the grave of St. Hippolytus. *Cubiculum*, indeed, was even used among Pagans in connection with their sepulchres; not, however, as the name of the sepulchre itself, but only of the chamber that was often attached to it, in which the relatives and friends of the deceased used to meet for the celebration of the funeral feasts. Hence in one inscription it is called *cubiculum superius ad confre-quentandam memoriam quiescentium*, "the upper chamber to celebrate the memory of the dead;" and in another it is called *cubiculum memoriæ*. In the Catacombs it was used without any adjunct, simply as equivalent to what we should now call a family vault, and doubtless it received this sense by analogy from its primitive meaning as a bedchamber. On the architrave of a doorway in the Cemetery of St. Agnes was engraved CUBICULUM DOMITIANI. In the Cemetery of St. Callixtus we have CUBICULUS FAL. GAUDENTI ARGENTARI; CUBICULUM AURELIÆ MARTINÆ CASTISSIME ADQUE PUDICISSIMÆ FŒMINÆ, &c., A.D. 336; and LOCA AD PERTINENTES AD CUBICULUM GERMULAN[I];[1] from which we understand that these several persons, Domitianus, Flavius (?) Gaudentius the silversmith, the most chaste and modest lady Aurelia Martina, and Germulanus (all probably living about the middle of the fourth century), made family vaults in the Catacombs at their own expense; and in the last instance, that other graves (*loca*) were bought in the neighbourhood for those who belonged to the same family, but who died after the vault was full.

Cubiculum.

R.S., iii. 474.

De Rossi is of opinion that even the word *catacomb* derives its origin from the same source as *cubiculum*; and that, like *bisomus*, *trisomus*, and others, it is a hybrid word, half Latin, half Greek; the latter half coming from the same root as *accumbo*, *recumbo*, &c., and the former being the preposition κατά, used (as was common in later Latin) instead of *ad*. He

Catacomb.

[1] Marchi, Monum. delle Arti Crist. Prim., p. 101.

takes the whole word, therefore, as equivalent to *ad cœmeteria*, or *accubitoria, Christianorum;* and, as we shall presently see, it was first applied to a spot where the chief of the Christian cemeteries were situated, whence in later times it has come to be extended to them all. A more generic name, which we shall meet with at the entrance of a family vault in one of the cemeteries, is *hypogeum*, or subterranean, which (as well as its Greek equivalent κατάγαιον) was sometimes used by Pagans also as the name of the lower story of their own sepulchral monuments. Once we meet with ἅγιον μαρτύριον, or "holy place of martyrs," but it is doubtful whether it was intended to apply this name to the whole cemetery, or whether it was not rather confined to the particular spot where it was placed, in the immediate neighbourhood of some martyr's grave. Another title which was sometimes used in the Catacombs, *locus sanctus*, or "holy place," especially if qualified by *hic*, "this holy place," seems certainly to have had only this narrow signification.

Explanation of terms: *Confessio*, *Cryptæ*.

Confessio, in Rome at least, was used only of the sepulchre of a martyr under an altar. St. Jerome uses the word *cryptæ* to express the whole subterranean excavation, both chambers and galleries, and it seems to have been so used in the Catacombs themselves, though by modern writers it has been generally understood as confined to the former. There is nothing in the following inscriptions, all of which come from the Catacombs,[1] to determine the sense of the word precisely:—

UNDECIMA CRYPTA GREGORIUS.

"In the eleventh crypt, Gregory."

IN CIMITERIUM BALBINÆ IN CRIPTA NOBA.

"In the cemetery of Balbina in the new crypt."

LOCUS TRISOMUS VICTORIS IN CRIPTA DAMASI.

"A grave for three bodies belonging to Victor in the crypt of Damasus."

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[1] Marchi, Monum. delle Arti Crist. Prim., p. 102; R. S., iii. 424.

IN CRYPTA NOBA RETRO SAN
CTUS EMERUM SE VIVAS BALER
RA ET SABINA MERUM LOC
U BISOM AB APRONE ET A
BIATORE

"Valeria and Sabina during their lifetime bought from Apro and Viator a grave for two bodies in the new crypt behind the saints."

IN CRYPTA NOBA IN SENESTRUM.

"In a new crypt on the left-hand side."

Staircases were hewn out of the rock by which to descend from one *piano* of the cemetery to another, and these seem to

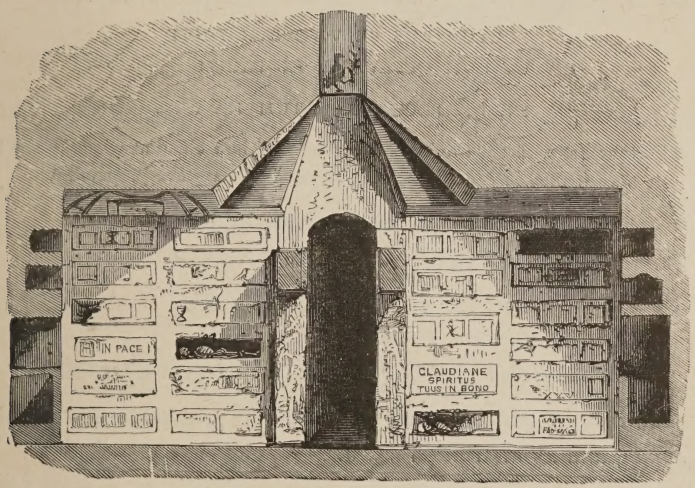


FIG. 4.—*Section of Chambers in Catacomb of Saints Marcellino and Pietro, showing lower end of the shaft of the luminare, with dove painted on it.*

have been called *catabatica*, from κατάβασις, a descent. Shafts also were pierced through the soil for the sake of giving light and air to the subterranean excavations, and the names of these were *luminaria*. In the Cemetery of Callixtus we can still see the inscription which testifies to the making by Severus, the Deacon of Pope Marcellinus, A.D. 296–308, of a CUBICULUM DUPLEX CUM ARCISOLIIS ET LUMINARE, "two vaults with arched tombs and a shaft for light;" and another inscription speaks

Catabatica. *R.S.*, iii. 421.

Luminare.

R.S., iii. 422.

of the purchase of a grave IN CATACUMBAS AD LUMENAREM. The first of these inscriptions proves the existence of these shafts even during the ages of persecution; but of course they were made more freely, and of larger dimensions, at a later period.

Locus, Bisomus, &c.

An ordinary grave was called *locus* if it contained a single body; or *bisomus*, *trisomus*, or *quadrisomus* (*locus* being understood or expressed) if it contained two, three, or four. Graves of this latter size could hardly be made horizontally in the walls of the galleries, so that it may be generally presumed that stones which speak of *quadrisomi* belong to graves dug in the porticoes, or under the pavements of churches, or in cemeteries under the open sky, not in the subterranean Catacombs:—

FORTUNATUS SE VIVO SIBI FECIT
UT CUM QUIEVERIT IN PACEM
IN ☧ LOCUM PARATUM HA . . .

"Fortunatus, whilst yet living, made [this] for himself, that when he shall have rested in peace in Christ, he may have a grave prepared."

R.S., ii. tav. lv. 6.

LOCUS MARCELLI ET PRIVATES.

"The grave of Marcellus and Privata."

HIC EST LOCUS QUEM SE VIVA
GENTIA BISOMU COMPARAVIT.[1]

"This is the grave for two bodies which Gentia bought in her lifetime."

Tabula. Titulus.

The stone which closed the mouth of the grave was called *tabula*, and its inscription *titulus*:—

POSUIT TABULA MAGISTER
DISCENTI PAMPINO BENEMERENTI.[2]

"His master put up this tablet to Pampinus, his well-deserving pupil."

Fossor.

The men who dug the Catacombs were called *fossores*, and as it was a work requiring not only a certain amount of skill and labour, but also zeal and devotedness to the Christian cause, we shall have occasion in a future chapter to say a good deal about them.[3] At present, we will confine ourselves to a mere quotation of two or three inscriptions concerning them,

[1] Marchi, p. 114. [2] Ibid. [3] See Book III. c. vi.

which were all found in one and the same part of the Cemetery of St. Agnes. The first of them still remains attached to its proper grave, and the second too has been left on the spot. The third was found by Bosio, and is published in his work.[1]

IOANNES LUCILLIANUS PROCLUS NEPOTES MAXIMIANO AO UNM
IN PACE PATER FILIA ET COGNATUS IPSO MESE VII KAL MAI.

"John, Lucillianus, and Proclus, grandsons, to their grandfather, Maximianus; together in peace in the same month, father, daughter, and brother-in-law. The 25th of April."

. . . . PROCLUS ANN III AUGUSTULE
. . . ATRI LUCILLIANO QUI VIXIT ANN XXXV
. . . O ANN X FOSSOR ANN VIII REDDIT
. . I MAI UNO MES
TOTI TRES UNM IN PACE.

". . . Proclus, three years; Augustula . . . to his father (or brother), Lucillianus who lived 35 years . . . ten years a fossor, eight years, gave up his life . . . of May, in one month, all three together in peace."

MAIO FOSSORI NEPOTES ET BONO NUTRITOR . . .
PROCLUS QUI VIXIT ANNIS XCVII ET DORMI . .
VI IDUS MAIAS IN PACE ET FOSSOR . . .
CALLIGONUS FOSSOR PATRI . . .

"To Maius the fossor and their good foster-father, his grandsons . . . Proclus who lived 98 years, and sleeps in peace on the 26th of May, and a fossor . . . Calligonus a fossor, to his father."

In spite of the imperfect condition of two of these inscriptions, the repetition of the same names, and of the same office of fossor, and the fact that they were all found together, clearly show that they all belong to the same family, several members of which pursued the laborious and dangerous profession of fossors.

Depositio.

The general name among the ancient Christians for burial was *depositio*, a word which, though not absolutely unknown in this sense among Pagan writers,[2] was specially in favour among Christians, doubtless for the same reason as they used

[1] Marchi, p. 90.

[2] See Epitaphs of Catacombs, p. 79.

dormit and *somnum pacis* when speaking of death, viz., because it expressed their belief in a future resurrection, which caused them to look upon burial as a merely temporary trust committed to the earth.

But there is something more than mere galleries of graves in the Catacombs. At various intervals, the succession of shelves is interrupted, that room may be made for a doorway, which admits us into a chamber, or perhaps a succession of chambers.

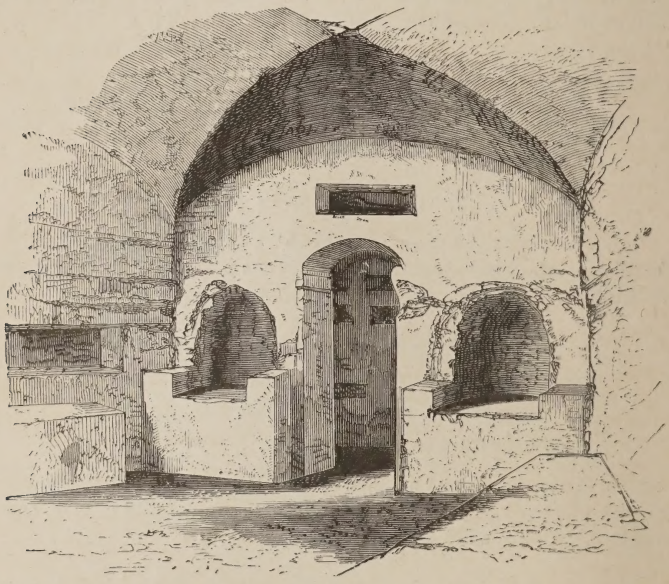


FIG. 5.—*Interior of a Cubiculum in St. Agnes', with chairs and bench hewn out of the Rock.*

These are generally small, and of rectangular form; some, however, are of considerable size, and hexagonal, polygonal, or even circular in shape. If the walls of these chambers are only pierced with graves like the galleries, we conclude that they were mere family vaults; and here and there an inscription has been preserved which tells us to what family this or that chamber belonged. Sometimes, a low bench may be seen cut out of the living rock all round the chamber, and a chair of the same material on one or both sides of the entrance, which

would seem to indicate that the chambers had been designed as places of assembly, either for purposes of instruction, or of united prayer and singing of psalms. Sometimes the wall opposite the doorway, or even on all three sides of the chamber, is pierced, not with graves like those in the galleries, but for a *Arcosolium.*

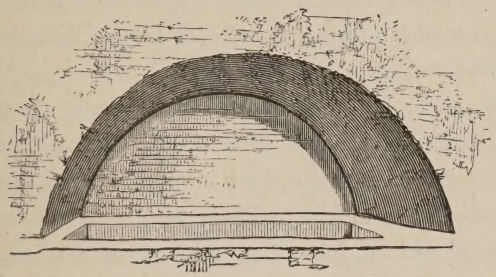


FIG. 6.—*Arcosolium.*

tomb of a more elaborate kind. A deep semicircular recess is excavated, and below the base line of this arch an oblong space is sunk in the rock to receive one or two bodies, or even three or four perhaps, separated from one another by intervening shelves, and then this deep grave is covered by a slab of marble

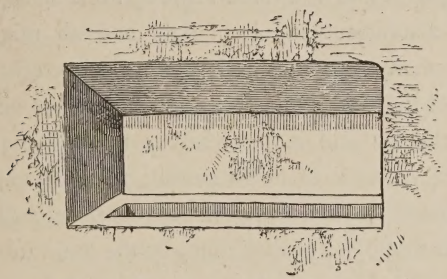


FIG. 7.—*Sepolcro a mensa or Table-tomb.*

(*mensa*) resting horizontally on the ledge of rock that was left for the purpose. Occasionally we find a tomb of this kind built up of masonry, or a sarcophagus was introduced under the arch. These more costly tombs were called *arcosolia* or *arcisolia; solium* having been a word in use among the Romans to denote the urn or chest, whether of stone, terra-cotta, or marble, in which some of the oldest and more noble families

buried their dead.[1] St. Paulinus of Nola uses it also simply as equivalent to a tomb; he calls the tomb of St. Felix *solium*. In an earlier form of the same tomb the recess was not arched, but excavated in a rectangular shape. It does not appear that tombs of this form were known by any special name, but De Rossi proposes to call them "table-tombs," by way of marking their difference both from the ordinary graves in the wall (*loca*) and from the arched tombs (*arcosolia*).

Those *arcosolia* which were also the tombs of martyrs were used on the anniversaries of their deaths (*Natalitia*, or birth-days) as altars whereon the holy mysteries were celebrated; hence, while some of the *cubicula* were only family vaults, others were chapels or places of public assembly. It is probable that the holy mysteries were sometimes also celebrated in the private vaults on the anniversaries of the deaths of their occupants; and each one was sufficiently large in itself for use on these private occasions; but in order that as many as possible might assist at the public celebrations, two, three, or even four of the *cubicula* were often made close together, all receiving light and ventilation through one shaft or air-hole. In this way a sufficient supply of light and air might be provided for as many as a hundred persons collected together in some parts of the Catacombs to assist at the same act of public worship; whilst a still larger number might have been dispersed in the *cubicula* of neighbouring galleries, and received there the bread of life, brought to them, according to the ecclesiastical discipline of that time, by the assistant ministers.

Outline of history.

At first the work of making the Catacombs was done openly, without let or hindrance, by the Christians, their graves being as effectually protected by the laws as those of their Pagan neighbours. During this time the entrances to them were made in public on the highroad or on the hillside, and the

[1] Inscript. Select. Orelli-Henzen, 4811. "Fictilibus soliis," apud Plin. H. N., xxxv. 46, 3.

galleries and chambers were freely decorated with paintings of a sacred character. But in consequence of imperial edicts of persecution at certain periods during the third century, it became necessary to withdraw them as much as possible from the public eye, and for this purpose new and difficult entrances were effected in the recesses of deserted *arenariæ*. Sometimes the emperors contented themselves with only forbidding the holding of assemblies in the cemeteries; sometimes they even confiscated the cemeteries themselves, so as to interfere with freedom of burial in them. In spite of every difficulty, however, the Christians persevered in making use of them as far as they could for both purposes; they continued to do so, even sometimes at the cost of their lives, down to the very end of the period of persecution. At that time, if not earlier, other cemeteries were made, with less cost and difficulty, above ground instead of below; and during the next hundred years both places of burial were in use. But after the fatal year 410, when Rome was taken by Alaric, the use of the Catacombs as the ordinary Christian cemeteries of Rome altogether ceased.

Catacombs used as burial-places

till fifth century.

By this time, however, they had gradually assumed another and a more important character. From the moment that peace was given to the Church and the Empire had become nominally Christian, these subterranean sanctuaries, in which she had been driven to take shelter during the long and pitiless storm, became an object of enthusiastic devotion. "Where else do the faithful flock with such zeal and in such numbers to the tombs of the martyrs as in Rome?" asks St. Jerome. Christian writers, both in prose and verse, have set before us a lively picture of the Capitol and other Pagan shrines neglected and empty whilst the whole city poured forth from its gates to do honour to the martyrs buried in the Catacombs. The crowds who frequented these shrines on the annual recurrence of their respective festivals was immense, so that it became necessary to provide more commodious means of entrance and exit, and in other ways to enlarge and improve the chapels

Frequented as shrines

within. Pope Damasus (A.D. 366–385) distinguished himself above others in his devotion to this work; he also set up a number of inscriptions at various places (generally written in verse, and all engraved by the same artist), in which he sometimes commemorates the triumphs of the martyrs, and sometimes his own work of restoration or decoration at their tombs.

The festivals continued to be celebrated here as long as the bodies of the martyrs remained in their original resting-places. But these having been desecrated, and sometimes plundered, by the Lombards and other invaders of Rome, the principal relics were removed into the city churches by the care of successive Popes, during a period of sixty or seventy years, beginning from the middle of the eighth century; and when this had been done, the Catacombs were naturally neglected, and by degrees forgotten.

till the translation of relics, A.D. 750; then neglected and forgotten.

Whilst, however, the bodies of the saints were being translated into Rome, and their tombs beginning to sink into that darkness of oblivion in which they were destined to lie buried for seven or eight hundred years, already the long pages of the "Martyrologium Hieronymianum," which are, as it were, a mysterious catalogue and register of them, were being eagerly transcribed in the monasteries of France, Germany, and Ireland. And it is our privilege to live in an age when the books and the monuments are once more brought face to face, mutually throwing light upon one another, and together building up a monument of Christian archæology and history, as solid and as brilliant as it was unlooked for.[1]

Records of them preserved.

[1] Nouvelles Études sur les Catacombes Romaines, par M. le Cte. Desbassayns de Richemont, p. 266.

CHAPTER II.

ANCIENT RECORDS.

Care of the early Church in compiling the Acts of the Martyrs and collecting their relics—Places of their burial recorded in most ancient Martyrologies —Church calendars—Inscriptions of Damasus—Itineraries of pilgrims —Lists of relics—Importance of the Acts of the Martyrs, even when of doubtful authenticity—Use of all these documents for the reconstruction of the topography and history of the Catacombs.

Authorities for this book.

EVERY intelligent reader desires to know something of the nature and value of the authority on which he is invited to give credence to any history that is presented to him; and, therefore, before we begin to narrate the history of the Roman Catacombs—"the tombs of the apostles and martyrs," as St. Jerome calls them—we will give some account of the documents to which we referred at the close of the last chapter. Indeed it will be well to give the whole literary history of the subject in one continuous narrative, comprising both the most ancient documents which reveal to us the existence and use of the Catacombs, and also the more modern authors who have either treated of the whole subject at large, or made important contributions to the illustration of special parts of it.

Old Martyrologies.

It can be no matter of surprise to any one to hear that such ancient documents should have been written, for we all know the exceeding care of the primitive Church in collecting and preserving a faithful record of the last words and deeds of her martyrs. It is notorious that her rulers spared no pains to imitate the example which St. Luke had set them in this matter, in the minuteness with which he has recited the Acts

of the protomartyr St. Stephen. Sometimes private Christians mingled, at the risk of their lives, with the crowd who assisted in the judgment-halls at the examination of the intrepid confessors of the faith, and these, treasuring up in their memory what they could see and hear, duly reported it to those whose duty it was to keep the record. Sometimes the holy martyrs themselves communicated the particulars of what they had suffered; sometimes copies of the official reports were bought from the clerks of the Pagan magistrates; and when by any of these means a trustworthy report had been obtained, the particular church to which the martyr belonged would embody it in an encyclical letter, and communicate it to other churches for their edification and encouragement.

It is recorded of St. Clement, before the end of the first century, that "he divided the seven [ecclesiastical] regions of Rome among faithful notaries of the Church, who should, each in his own region, with diligent care and zeal, search out the Acts of the Martyrs."[1] And of St. Fabian, Pope in the middle of the third century, it is added that "he divided the regions among the deacons, and appointed subdeacons to superintend the notaries, that they might collect in their integrity (*in integro*) the Acts of the Martyrs."[2] Most of these precious records perished in the persecution of Diocletian.[3] Still it was impossible but that some few of them should have escaped, and those fragments which remained were carefully gathered up in more peaceful times into precious volumes. It is known that Eusebius edited such a collection,[4] though unhappily it has perished, excepting only a part of it relating to the martyrs of Palestine, which is appended to the eighth book of his "Ecclesiastical History."

"Martyrologium Hieronymianum."

It is said that St. Jerome made a Latin translation of Eusebius's collection; but if so, this also has perished in the same

[1] Lib. Pontif., c. iv. [2] Ibid., c. xxi.
[3] Euseb. H. E. viii. 2. Arnob. adv. Gentes, iv. 36.
[4] H. E. iv. 15, v. 21.

way. For the Martyrology which goes by his name, published by Fiorentini, under the title "Vetustius Occidentalis Ecclesiæ Martyrologium" (Lucca, 1688), and which is the most ancient that is extant, was not put together in its present form till a much later date. It was compiled, and not very carefully, from the calendars of various churches, and contains therefore some repetitions, inconsistencies, and contradictions. Nevertheless it is an invaluable record, and some parts of it were undoubtedly taken from monuments which belonged to the ages of persecution. One compiler or copyist of this Martyrology must have lived in the time of Melchiades, who was Pope A.D. 311–314, and another in the time of Boniface I., A.D. 418–422, since festivals are noted here both of the first named Pontiff on the 2d of July, and "Bonifacii Epi de Ordinatione" on the 29th of December, besides the death or burial of each of them on other days on which they are still commemorated. But the anniversary of the accession of a pope, or indeed of any bishop, is only celebrated during his lifetime, so that we may be sure of the dates at which these notices were written. The keenness of modern criticism has detected other indications of the same kind. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the repetitions, and even the errors and contradictions, into which the latest compiler of this Martyrology has been betrayed by copying from several older editions, have often furnished clues whereby the ingenuity and patience of modern authors have been able to unravel the truth. One specially valuable feature of the book is, that in nearly every instance it tells us in which Catacomb each Roman martyr was buried.

Almanac of Fur. Dion. Filocalus.

Next in chronological order after the "Martyrologium Hieronymianum" comes the Christian Almanac (for we can call it by no more appropriate name), the first edition of which appears to have been published A.D. 336, and the latest, with highly ornamental illustrations by Furius Dionysius Filocalus, A.D. 354. This almanac contains sundry official documents, both civil and ecclesiastical—*e.g.*, the astronomical and civil

calendar for the year, with the birthdays of the emperors, including that of Constantine (who must have been then alive, as he is called *Dominus*, not *Divus*); the lunar cycle then in use at Rome for the determination of Easter; a table, showing on what days that feast would fall during the hundred years which followed A.D. 312—a table which was probably published by Pope Melchiades as soon as peace was given to the Church; —a list of the consuls, from the year 205 to 354; of the prefects of the city from 254 to 354, and of the deaths or burials of the popes precisely during the same period. These, however, are not arranged in chronological order, but as they would have appeared in a Church Calendar, according to the order of months in which they died. Then follows another catalogue of the popes, which is arranged chronologically from St. Peter to Liberius; and lastly, a calendar of the principal Christian festivals celebrated during the year, especially of martyrs, but including also Christmas-day, the Chair of Peter, and some other immovable feasts. We shall have occasion to recur to some of these documents in future chapters; at present we will only say that the list of the burials of the popes, and the notices of the cemeteries in which the feasts of the martyrs were kept, which occur in the Feriale, or ecclesiastical calendar, are of special value to the historian of the Catacombs.

Inscriptions of Pope Damasus.

Next in order of time, but deserving to be placed even before the Calendar in point of importance, are certain inscriptions composed by Pope Damasus, engraved by the same Furius Dionysius Filocalus, and set up by the holy Pontiff at many of the martyrs' tombs. Several of these monuments destroyed by the Goths, Lombards, and other sacrilegious barbarians, were restored, more or less correctly, by later Popes: many are preserved to us only through the copies that were taken by learned ecclesiastics or pious pilgrims in the ninth or tenth centuries; some few yet remain in their original integrity, and fragments of others have been discovered in the Catacombs in our own day. These monuments, wherever

they are found, are witnesses of the highest authority on questions relating to the history or geography of the cemeteries.

The classical descriptions of the Catacombs by St. Jerome and Prudentius belong to the same period, but it will be more convenient to quote them in another place. So we will next speak of the "Liber Pontificalis," or, as it is sometimes (less correctly) called, the Lives of the Pontiffs, by the librarian Anastasius. This book, like the "Martyrologium Hieronymianum," is a compilation from many more ancient documents, and there had been at least three versions or editions of it before the days of Anastasius, who lived in the middle of the ninth century. Two of these had been made at the beginning and about the middle of the eighth century, and another in the beginning of the sixth, under Felix IV., A.D. 530; but a portion of it may even be traced to the times of St. Damasus, if not to a yet earlier period. Its statements are often at variance with those of the almanac and the most ancient Martyrology, especially in naming the days on which the memory of each Pope was celebrated; but it is very accurate in its local notices, and its variations in the matter of dates are sometimes useful in enabling us to unravel the truth. Often they are accounted for by the fact that they record some translation of the Popes' relics, instead of the day of the original burial. Certainly there could be no object in changing the dates without reason, and we can only suppose that the compiler followed some other authority.

"Liber Pontificalis."

The same remark may be applied in some measure also to the Martyrologies of Bede, Ado, Usuard, and others, when they differ from the "Martyrologium Hieronymianum," which may be said to be the foundation of them all. That of Bede was compiled in the beginning of the eighth century, partly from this Martyrology, partly also from the "Liber Pontificalis," and from separate Acts of the Martyrs. It has not reached us in its original form, but only as it was enlarged by Florus,

Other Martyrologies.

Bede.

a deacon of Lyons early in the ninth century (830), and by Rabanus Maurus, who was Archbishop of Mayence about the same time (847). Ado, Archbishop of Vienna, who died in 875, produced a similar work, but quite independently of the last-named writers. His chief guide was a small but very ancient Martyrology which had been sent from Rome to a Bishop of Aquileia in former times, and which being lent to Ado for a few days, he hastily transcribed. The author of it departs in various particulars from older calendars, and seems to have trusted his own judgment, exercised upon various documents which he had before him, and which were then considered authentic. De Rossi has found a copy of it in the Monastery of St. Gall, which he believes to be coeval with Ado himself, and he often appeals to it under the title of the "Parvum Romanum." Notker, a monk of St. Gall, who died A.D. 912, fused the works of Rabanus and Ado into one. But it is the Martyrology of Usuard, a Benedictine monk of Paris in the days of Charlemagne, compiled chiefly from Ado's, which is the foundation of the Roman Martyrology now in use.

Ado.

Usuard.

Acts of the Martyrs.

All these Martyrologies occasionally give local notices which are of value. On the whole, however, they are less important than the separate Acts of the Martyrs, which, even when not authentic, not unfrequently contain valuable fragments of truth. Tillemont and other critics of his school have dealt with these venerable records of antiquity too summarily. Disgusted by the flagrant anachronisms, or the barbarous diction, or the tone of legendary exaggeration, or the historical difficulties which abound in them, they have found it easier to reject altogether than to criticise and distinguish; whilst a more learned and cautious examination not unfrequently succeeds in detecting many traces of a true and genuine story. The Acts of St. Cecilia, for example, which were so thoroughly set aside by Tillemont that he questioned whether there had ever been such a virgin and martyr in Rome at all,

and suspected that her history might perhaps have been a myth imported from Sicily, are certainly not, in their present form, a genuine and original document; they are not contemporary with the martyrdom itself; on the contrary, both in the preface and in the body of the Acts there are clear tokens of a writer living in the time of peace, between the fourth and fifth centuries;[1] nevertheless it is equally certain that they must have been composed upon very minute and truthful records, since a number of circumstances which they narrate were most exactly confirmed on the rediscovery of her relics at the end of the sixteenth century, which relics were certainly hid from every human eye at the time of the compilation of the Acts. Moreover, on a critical comparison of the various readings even of the MSS. which still exist of these Acts, it is easy to detect the little additions and embellishments introduced by later writers.[2] They are precisely such as we might have anticipated; and it is probable that the original compiler did not use greater license in dealing with the materials before him, than his own successors used towards himself. In either case, it was not such as to destroy the substance of the story, nor to distort its principal features, historical or geographical; and as many of these spurious Acts (if they must still be branded by this opprobrious epithet) were written before the eighth century—*i.e.*, before the sacred deposits in the Catacombs had been translated from their first resting-place, they have been of great service in enabling De Rossi to reconstruct some parts of subterranean Rome. The same may be said also of some incidental notices in the ancient liturgical books of the Roman Church.

Itineraries of pilgrims in the seventh century.

None of these documents, however, has proved so useful as certain ancient Itineraries, or guide-books to the monuments of Rome, of which there were once a great many. The oldest

[1] They cannot be much later, for the liturgical prayers both of Leo and of Gelasius abound with allusions to them.

[2] See Note A. in Appendix.

of these which has yet been discovered, containing any reference to the shrines of the martyrs, belongs to the middle of the fifth century. Cardinal Mai has published another, written in Syriac, about a century later. But in both of these, the reference is very indistinct and vague. A more full and valuable account has been preserved to us by William of Malmesbury in his description of the visit of the Crusaders to Rome, A.D. 1095.[1] It was written (as internal evidence clearly shows) between the years A.D. 650 and 680. Another of these Itineraries, written about a century later, was published by Mabillon, in 1685, from a MS. in Einsiedlen; and a third, belonging to the seventh century, by Eckart,[2] in 1729, from a MS. of the tenth century, found in the library of Wurtzburg. These, however, are all surpassed in value by two others which were discovered about a hundred years ago in the library of Salzburg, and published as an appendix to an edition of the works of Alcuin, with which the MSS. had been accidentally bound up. It is certain from internal evidence that one of these, and that the most exact, was written between the years 625 and 638, and the other not many years later. The first[3] is a genuine Itinerary, written on the spot, and abounds with topographical notices in most minute detail of all that the writer saw, above ground or below, on his right hand or his left, to the east or the west. He starts from the centre of Rome, and proceeds northwards through the Flaminian gate; and in visiting the various roads in order, he does not return to Rome and make a fresh beginning every time, but goes across from one road to another by bypaths, many of which still remain. The second,[4] though following the same general plan, and taking each road in succession, is not

[1] In the excellent edition of Duffus Hardy, tom. ii. pp. 539–544. In Stevenson's translation (1854), p. 301, Book iv. sec. 352.

[2] Commentar. de rebus Franciæ Occidentalis, tom. i. p. 831.

[3] Notitia Portarum, Viarum, Ecclesiarum circa Urbem Romam. R. S., i. 155.

[4] De Locis Sanctis Martyrum quæ sunt foris Civitatem Romæ.

the real journal or description of what had been seen by the traveller himself; rather, it bears tokens of being an epitome of some larger work. However, both of them were written before the practice of translation of relics had begun, so that the minute topographical details which they record have reference to the original condition of the Catacombs before their traditions had been obscured.

Papyrus list of *olea* at Monza.

In the same category with these Itineraries may be classed the list of relics collected by the Abbot John in the days of St. Gregory the Great, A.D. 600, and sent to Theodolinda, Queen of the Lombards. This list, written on papyrus, together with many of the relics themselves, and the little parchment labels attached to them, is still to be seen in the cathedral of Monza.[1] We must not, however, be misled by the word "*relics*," and picture to ourselves, according to modern custom, the bodies or portions of the bodies of saints. St. Gregory himself specifies the only kinds of relics that in his day were permitted to be carried away by the faithful. He writes to the Empress Constantia: "When the Romans give the relics of the saints, they do not touch the bodies: their custom is only to put a piece of linen in a box, which is placed near the holy body, and which they afterwards take away. . . . In the time of the Pope St. Leo, some Greeks, doubting of the virtue of these relics, brought scissors and cut the linen, from whence proceeded blood, as is reported by the ancient inhabitants."[2] But besides these, drops of oil from the lamps which burned before the tombs of the saints were frequently carried away as relics; and St. Gregory often sent these *olea* in little glass phials to persons at

[1] It has been published by Marini, Papir. Diplom., p. 327, No. CXLIII. See also p. 377. Drawings of the ampullæ may be seen in Garruci's Storia dell' Arte Cristiana, tav. 432, 433.

[2] Epist. lib. iii. ep. 30. The pieces of linen were called *brandea*. Some of those presented by St. Gregory the Great were still preserved in the days of Mabillon in the Church of St. Germain des Prés in Paris. See also the story in St. Aug., Confess. ix. 7.

a distance.[1] They were relics of this latter kind that were collected by John the Abbot; and in the list of them he carefully records every shrine which he visited, and this (as was natural) in the order of his visits. A comparison of this local order with the topographical notices in the Itineraries by De Rossi has been specially fruitful in important results; but all writings of a later date have been useless. The "Mirabilia Urbis Romæ," of the latter half of the tenth century, contains indeed a short paragraph about the Catacombs, but it is full of errors; whilst the lists of Roman churches in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, though including some that were already in ruins, yet make no mention of the Catacombs whatever. In fact, they were by that time entirely lost sight of, and lay in the most complete obscurity until nearly the end of the sixteenth century, so that when Onuphrius Panvinius, an Augustinian friar, considered the marvel of his age for learning and industry, published a work in 1568 on the "Ceremonies of Christian Burial and the Ancient Christian Cemeteries," he could only gather their names from the Acts of the Martyrs and other ancient documents. He expressly states that only three of them were at all accessible—that at St. Sebastian's, that at San Lorenzo, meaning (as is clear from his description) the single gallery which may yet be seen from the window of the chapel of St. Cyriaca in the Basilica itself, and that of St. Valentine on the Via Flaminia. Ten years later, however, an accident brought to light another of the ancient cemeteries, far more interesting than either of them, and a desire was at once enkindled, both in the interests of religion and of learning, to know something more about such venerable monuments of antiquity.

[1] This custom may still be seen in Rome, where people take oil from the lamp that burns before the statue of the *Madonna del Parto*, in the Church of Sant' Agostino, and from other shrines.

CHAPTER III.

MODERN AUTHORS.

Catacombs rediscovered in 1578—*Earlier visits of Franciscan friars and Pomponio Leto and the Academicians in the fifteenth century—Researches of Ciacconio, De Winghe, Macarius, and Bosio—His immense learning and industry—Labour in the Catacombs and its danger—Posthumous publication of his "Roma Sotterranea," and its success—The excellence of its method—Sad destruction of antiquities in the Catacombs: at length prevented by the Popes—Protestant notices of the Catacombs—Antony Munday—John Evelyn—Burnet and Misson—Works of Fabretti, Boldetti, Buonarroti, Lupi, Marangoni, and Bottari in the eighteenth century—D'Agincourt, his work and devastations—Raoul-Rochette—Settele—P. Marchi—De Rossi follows system of Bosio; his wonderful talent, industry, and success; his conscientious integrity.*

Discovery, A.D. 1578.

ON the last day of May, A.D. 1578, some labourers, who were digging *pozzolana* in a vineyard on the Via Salaria, about two miles beyond the walls, happened to break into a gallery of graves, ornamented with Christian paintings, Greek and Latin inscriptions, and two or three sculptured sarcophagi. The discovery at once attracted universal attention, and persons of all classes flocked to see it. "Rome was amazed," writes a contemporary author, "at finding that she had other cities, unknown to her, concealed beneath her own suburbs, beginning now to understand what she had before only heard or read of;" and "In that day," says De Rossi, "was born the name and the knowledge of *Roma Sotterranea.*"

of Roma Sotterranea.

It is true that the man who was destined to be the first thoroughly to explore and describe this city of the dead, was as yet only three years old;[1] but even then there were not

[1] Bosio, Rom. Sott., p. 511.

wanting men whose learning and industry sufficed to keep alive the newly enkindled flame of love for Christian antiquities. Nearly one hundred and fifty years before, and at various intervals during half a century, precisely similar subterranean excavations had been seen in another vineyard on the opposite side of the city; but those who saw them were either men of religion, attracted by motives of piety, or men of learning, indeed, but with enthusiasm only for what was Pagan.

Earlier visits of friars

Among the first class must be reckoned certain Franciscan friars, whose visits to the Catacomb of St. Callixtus ranged between the years 1432 and 1482, and are recorded by scribbling on the walls of two or three chambers in one quarter of that cemetery. "Came here to visit this holy place" (*fuit hic ad visitandum sanctum locum istum*), writes Brother Lawrence of Sicily, with twenty brethren of the order of Friars Minor, 17th January 1451. Another visit by friars of the same order was made in 1455, "in the week in which Pope Nicholas V. died" (*hebdomadâ quâ defuntus est pp. N. V.*) An abbot of St. Sebastian's entered with a large party (*cum magnâ comitivâ*), 19th May 1469; some Scotchmen in 1467 (*MCCCCLXVII. quidam Scoti hic fuerunt*); an abbot of St. Hermes, in Pisa, with seven religious companions in the same year; Dominus Raynutius de Farnesio with some companions in 1490, &c. Not one, however, of these numerous visitors seems to have thought of making any historical or antiquarian examination of the precious monuments of the past which were before them.

and Roman Academicians fruitless.

The other class of visitors to whom we have alluded belonged to the same period, but were men of a very different character. The names of Pomponio Leto and other *litterati*, his associates in the famous Roman Academy, may still be read in several places of various Catacombs, written there by themselves, with the addition of their title as *Unanimes antiquitatis Amatores*, or *Perscrutatores;* yet not one of them seems ever to have made any study of what he saw, certainly none ever wrote a special treatise about it. The only notice of it that

occurs in any of their writings is in the Lives of the Popes by Platina, who takes occasion, when recording the institution of the Cemetery of Callixtus, to state that "he had visited these places with some of his friends; that the bones and ashes of the martyrs may still be seen there, and the chapels in which the holy sacrifice was offered, when the public celebration of Christian worship was forbidden by imperial edicts."[1] Platina also says that the motive which induced his friends and himself to visit these subterranean places was a religious one (*invisi ego hæc loca cum amicis quibusdam religionis causâ*); but it is unfortunate that the inscriptions which they left behind them do not confirm this statement. On the contrary, when taken in conjunction with what is known of the history of the writers, they suggest or strengthen suspicions of another kind. Those who are familiar with the literary history of that time will remember how the Roman Academy fell into disgrace with the Sovereign Pontiff Paul II., on suspicion both of being affected with heresy and of conspiring against the Government. One of the grounds for the first of these charges was their pedantic conceit of taking old Pagan classical names in place of their Christian ones; but it has always been a matter of controversy how far the charge of conspiracy was really supported by evidence; and Tiraboschi hardly mentions any appreciable ground for it at all.[2] We are not here concerned with the religious or political integrity of the Academy; yet, in elucidation of an obscure point in history, it is worth while to mention that the name of Pomponio Leto is found in these newly-discovered memorials of him, with the title of *Pontifex Maximus*, and even *Pont. Max. regnans;* that another member, calling himself by the name of Pantagathus, is described as *Sacerdos Achademiæ Rom.;* a third is *Æmilius vatum princeps*, and to some of the names other titles are added, which show the dissolute habits of the Academicians, and that they were

Pomponio Leto.

[1] Vitæ Pont. in Callisto., ed. Elzevir, 1645, p. 56.

[2] Storia della Litteratura Italiana, tom. vi. part i. pp. 93–97.

not ashamed to perpetuate their own memories, as lovers, not only of Pagan names, but of Pagan morals. Another circumstance, too, ought not to be overlooked—viz., that, whereas the names of the friars and others who "came to visit this holy place" are found in the chambers and galleries nearest to the staircase, these "lovers and investigators of antiquity" uniformly left records of their visits in the most distant and inaccessible parts of the cemetery. But whatever may have been the moral and religious character of this association, it must at least always remain a matter of profound regret and surprise, that men whose lives were devoted to the revival of learning, and of whose chief it is particularly recorded that he applied himself to the elucidation of Roman antiquities "which were then being disinterred," should have been familiar with these earliest monuments of the heroic age of Christianity, and yet never have felt sufficient interest to excite them to investigate their history, or to publish anything at all about them. Whatever they may really have believed, we cannot wonder at the charge brought against them by their contemporaries, and which we find addressed to one of them by a bishop even after their acquittal, that they were more Pagans than Christians.

We fear, indeed, that this charge might at that time have been justly urged against many besides the members of the Roman Academy. Now, however, in the year of which we have spoken, A.D. 1578, Christian learning and Christian morality were in a far more hopeful condition in the Eternal City. It was the age of St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Charles Borromeo, and St. Philip Neri. Baronius, the friend and disciple of the latter, was already engaged on his immortal work, the "Ecclesiastical Annals," in more than one page of which [1] he shows the warmth of his interest in the new discovery, and his just appreciation of its importance. He was among the first to visit it, and had not his time been fully absorbed by his own gigantic work, he might, perhaps, have become its first explorer and historian.

Baronius.

[1] Ad ann. 57, cxii. 130, iii. 226, viii., ix.

As it was, this labour and honour seems rather to have fallen to the lot of foreigners resident in Rome, than to Romans themselves. They were Alfonso Ciacconio, a Spanish Dominican, and two young Flemish laymen, Philip de Winghe, and Joannes Macarius (the Grecised form of Jean l'Heureux); but the labours, even of these, were not destined to be of much service in spreading a knowledge of the Catacombs among their contemporaries.

Researches of Ciacconio,

Ciacconio was a man who delighted in investigating and collecting curiosities of every kind, and possessed a valuable museum of Christian and Pagan antiquities. He also employed artists to copy for him some of the more remarkable paintings in the Catacombs. The skill of these artists appears hardly to have been equal to their good intentions, since we are told that Noe in the Ark, with the dove bringing him the olive branch, was represented and explained as "Marcellus, Pope, and Martyr, instructed by an angel whilst he is preaching." De Winghe, not unnaturally, was dissatisfied with his friend's performance, and had the paintings more faithfully recopied for himself. These copies, though seen and used both by Macarius and Bosio, have never been made public; but De Rossi believes that he has discovered a few in the National Library at Paris, and that he has himself acquired copies of others in a MS. of Claude Menestrier.[1] Had De Winghe lived, he would, doubtless, have been the first writer on Roma Sotterranea; Baronius, Frederic Borromeo, and other good and learned men set their hopes upon him, and his talents and industry seem to have been in every way worthy of their expectations. He died, however, at a very early age at Florence, in the summer of 1592; and his MSS., after having formed part of the famous library of the Bollandists, were sold in 1825 with the rest of that magnificent collection, and now remain unedited in the Royal Library at Brussels. The notes of Ciacconio, exceedingly voluminous and miscellaneous, appear never to

De Winghe,

[1] Bullett., 1865, p. 80.

have been prepared for publication, and still lie buried in various public and private libraries of Rome and Naples. He had been too much occupied with his "Lives of the Popes and Cardinals" to undertake a new publication. The labours of Macarius were scarcely more fruitful; they were continued during a residence of twenty years in Rome, and the work in which they resulted was prepared for publication, and even licensed for printing on the 22d of June 1605. The author, however, although he lived until 1614, left his work still in MS. to a public library in Louvain. It was afterwards annotated by Bollandus, who announced its publication, but died before redeeming his promise; and it is only in our own day that Padre Garrucci, S.J., has given this precious manuscript to the public.[1]

and Macarius.

The labours of all these and of some others mentioned by De Rossi, great as they may have been, fade into insignificance when compared with those of Antonio Bosio, who has justly been called the true Columbus of this subterranean world. He was a man worthy to be had in remembrance. De Rossi seems unable to speak of him without a certain feeling of enthusiastic reverence and devotion, in which all lovers of Christian archæology must heartily sympathise. A Maltese by birth, an advocate by profession, Bosio had resided in Rome from his earliest years with his uncle, who was *Procuratore*, or Roman agent for the Knights of Malta. He was a friend of Ciacconio, and his attention was drawn to the subject of the Catacombs, while he was yet very young; and when once he had taken it up, he never abandoned it. The earliest date recorded in his book, and found written on the walls of a catacomb (on the Via Ardeatina), is December 10, 1593, the year after the death of De Winghe, when Bosio himself was not yet eighteen; and his labours were continued,

Antonio Bosio.

His life and labours.

[1] HAGIOGLYPTA, sive Picturæ et Sculpturæ sacræ Antiquiores præsertim quæ Romæ reperiuntur, explicatæ a Joanne l'Heureux (Macario). Paris, 1856.

both in the cemeteries themselves, and in studying the works of authors from whom he expected to derive information on the subject, for the six and thirty years of his subsequent life. His industry was prodigious; and the volumes of his MSS., still extant in the Bibliotheca Vallicelliana (the Oratorian Library) at Rome, are a wonderful monument of it. Two of these volumes, containing upwards of two thousand pages folio, besides fifty pages of index, all in his own handwriting, show that he had read carefully through all the Fathers, Greek, Latin, and Oriental; all the collections of canons and councils, ecclesiastical histories, lives of the saints, and an immense number of theological treatises, including those of the Schoolmen; in fact, every work in which he thought there was a chance of finding anything in illustration of his subject. In two other volumes of the same size he transcribed the Acts of the Martyrs, especially of all those who suffered in Rome, together with other ancient records, which he had found in the Vatican or other libraries, and which bore upon the topography of the Christian cemeteries. And it is certain that even these volumes by no means represent the whole of his writings, for he himself refers to other commonplace-books of his which are now lost.

Immense learning and industry.

Again, in making our estimate of the labours of this truly great man, we must never forget the anxious, fatiguing, and even dangerous nature of his subterranean researches. When, from his study of ancient records, he had ascertained something as to the probable position of a Christian cemetery on one or other of the Roman roads, he would explore with the utmost diligence all the vineyards of the neighbourhood, in order to discover, if possible, some entrance into the bowels of the earth; and often, after returning again and again to the same spot, his labour would be all in vain. At another time he would hear of some opening having been accidentally made into a Catacomb, by the digging of a new cellar or a well, and would hasten to the spot, only to find that the whole

Labours in the Catacombs.

Dangers of his work.

place was so buried in ruins that all ingress was impossible. Even when an entrance was once effected, he still had to force a passage, often by the labour of his own hands, through the accumulated rubbish of ages; or, if the galleries were tolerably clear, there was the danger of being drawn too far in the eagerness of discovery, and of being unable to retrace his steps through the intricate windings of these subterranean labyrinths. In fact, this danger was actually experienced on his very first visit to the Catacombs, in company with Pompeo Ugonio and others, on the 10th of December 1593. They had penetrated into a Catacomb about a mile distant from St. Sebastian's, and having forced their way into a lower level, by means of an opening in the floor of one of the chapels, they incautiously proceeded so far, that when they wished to return, they could not recognise the path by which they had come. To add to their perplexity, their lights failed them, for they had remained underground longer than they had intended; and "I began to fear," says Bosio, "that I should defile by my vile corpse the sepulchres of the martyrs." Taught by this experience, he always in future visits took with him a quantity of candles, provisions, and other requisites sufficient for two or three days, and he sometimes spent whole nights there as well as days.

Publication of Bosio's "Roma Sotterranea," begun in A.D. 1632, finished in 1635.

This indefatigable examination of the Catacombs, and of all ancient documents connected with them, was continued, as we have said, for six and thirty years, during which he gained access to about thirty cemeteries. At length he, too, paid the debt of nature, A.D. 1629, without having either completed his work or published any part of it. It seemed as though Roma Sotterranea were never to be revealed to the world at large. His work, however, was too important to be allowed to lie buried as had those of his predecessors. He had powerful friends, who would not suffer the fruit of so much labour to perish. His papers and other property had been bequeathed to the Order of the Knights of Malta, with

whom, as we have seen, his uncle had been officially connected. The Ambassador of the Order then at Rome, Prince Carlo Aldobrandini, showed the MSS. to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, the librarian of the Vatican, the nephew of the reigning Pontiff, the friend of Galileo, and the Mæcenas of those days. The Cardinal at once recognised their value, and lost no time in engaging Padre Severano, of the Oratory, to put the finishing stroke to the work. An eminent architect and mathematician were employed to draw the plans and maps which were still wanting; the Knights of Malta undertook the expense; and in five years' time the magnificent volume which we now possess was produced and dedicated to Pope Urban VIII.[1] It was welcomed by the whole literary and archæological world with the utmost eagerness, and the demand for it was such that a Latin and a German translation were begun almost immediately after its appearance, and an abridgment was soon published in Holland. Bosio himself had at one time intended to compose the whole work in Latin, and a portion of it written in that language may still be seen among his MSS., although through some oversight this portion was not incorporated into Severano's original edition. Something appears to have prevented the publication of Severano's translation; and it was not until fifteen or sixteen years later that a new translation, with considerable alterations and omissions (we cannot call them improvements), was published by Aringhi, in 1651.[2]

Its success.

Although Bosio's work was never completed according to his own original design, yet the omissions were for the most part such as could be supplied from the works of other authors. Had his life been spared, he intended to have described and illustrated the practice of the earliest ages of the Church with reference to the administration of the sacrament of Penance,

Value of Bosio's work.

[1] Roma Sotterranea, opera postuma di Antonio Bosio composta disposta ed accresciuta da Giovanni di Severano, Sacerdote della Congregazione dell' Oratorio. Roma, 1632.

[2] Roma Subterranea novissima post Ant. Bosium et Joan. Severanum. Romæ, 1651.

the Viaticum, Extreme Unction, prayers for the dying and the dead, and other matters connected with the death and burial of Christians. In these particulars his book was deficient, but in its detailed account of each cemetery which he had visited, it was most complete; and the whole was admirably arranged on a very simple principle of topography. He took in order all the great consular roads which led out of Rome, and collected every historical notice he could find concerning the Christian cemeteries on each of them; their precise position, their names, their founders, and the martyrs or other persons of distinction who had been buried in them. He then by the light of this information examined all the Catacombs he had seen, and endeavoured to assign to each its proper name and history. That his conjectures were often erroneous, is only what might have been expected from the known inaccuracy and sometimes spuriousness of the Acts of the Martyrs and other authorities by which he was led; but these were the only guides which could then be had; and the system itself is quite unexceptionable; indeed, it is the only one that can be safely followed in laying a solid foundation for a scientific treatment of the whole subject.

Its general plan.

It is much to be regretted, therefore, that the work so wisely begun should not have been continued on the same plan and with the same diligence. But the rediscovery of the Catacombs was not a matter of merely archæological interest: the devotion of the faithful was excited by the report that in those dark recesses might still be lying concealed the remains of saints and martyrs; and the concessions made to the piety of individuals to search for and extract these relics proved in the end most disastrous to the cemeteries as authentic records of the early Roman Church. Instead of the ecclesiastical authorities taking this matter into their own hands, as they have since happily done, and proclaiming themselves the watchful and jealous guardians of such precious treasures, they permitted a number of private persons, acting independently of each other,

Destruction of antiquities in Catacombs since their recovery.

to make excavations. It is true that rules were laid down, and learned pamphlets were written to prove the value of these rules for the identification and translation of the relics, and we have no reason to doubt that they were scrupulously observed. But, in the interests of Christian archæology, we may justly complain that those engaged in the search had no regard for the preservation of monuments, whether of painting, sculpture, or inscriptions, which came in their way. They did not even care to keep a record of what they had seen, which would at least have provided materials for future *litterati* to continue the work of Bosio. Many of these permissions to extract relics were given to religious communities; and all the explorers availed themselves, in their researches, of some of the workmen who had been employed by Bosio. None of them, however, followed any systematic and comprehensive plan; and soon afterwards the permissions were revoked and vigorously repressed by the Popes. We find traces of them for the last time during the pontificate of Urban VIII.; and under Clement IX., about A.D. 1668, the arrangements which still prevail were definitely settled. The loss, however, sustained by Christian archæology in the interval is incalculable; and all must heartily sympathise with De Rossi, both in his lamentations and his astonishment that such ravages should have been tolerated in silence, under the very eyes, as it were, of such men as Holstenius, Allaccius, and other antiquarians who were then living in Rome. We learn something of the nature and extent of our loss from the incidental notices which occur in the writings of the archæologists of the seventeenth century; thus, we hear of a sepulchre all covered with gold, of a superb cameo, a series of the rarest coins and medals, various ornaments in crystal and metal, &c., besides a multitude of other objects which were secretly sold by the labourers engaged in the excavations; but we are told nothing as to the precise localities in which any of these things were found. Had but an accurate record been kept of all discoveries, the work of reconstructing the history and topo-

Too long permitted;

stopped at last by the Popes, about 1668.

Lost treasures.

graphy of these cemeteries would have been comparatively easy and certain. Truly nothing is so vexatious, as a modern historian has justly remarked, "as the constantly recurring fact, that the most precious relics of antiquity, having lasted through centuries of neglect and oblivion, are destroyed when they are on the point of coming within the grasp of modern research."

Nothing new from 1650 to 1700.

After the works of Bosio and Aringhi, the literary history of the Catacombs remains a blank for nearly half a century. They had taken their place among the *mirabilia* of Rome, and as such were an object of curiosity to all intelligent travellers; but those who visited them were generally more influenced by religious than by scientific motives. Bosio's work had been the means of recalling some learned Protestants to the bosom of the Church;[1] and thenceforward the subject became an arena for party strife, or rather it would be more true to say that it had been so made from the very beginning.

Protestant notices of the Catacombs.

Antony Munday, 1590.

Three years before Bosio had set foot in the Catacombs, a book had been published in London by the notorious spy, Antony Munday, under the title of "The English Romayne Life, discovering the lives of the Englishmen at Rome;" and the fifth chapter of this work contains "a brief discourse of their dark vautes underneath the grounde, and how they beguile a number by them." The writer asserts that "the Jesuites of the English College showed him in divers places that there lay such a saint, and there lay such another; there they were buried, and none was there but they were all saints." It would have been possible, perhaps, for his readers to have given credence to this part of his statement, but the following ought surely to have opened their eyes to the true character of the writer. He says, "If they chance to find a bone (as some sure are thrown in of purpose to deceive the people), whether it be of a dog, a hog, a sheep, or any beast, they can presently tell what saint's bone it was, either St. Francis, St. Anthony, St. Blase, or some other saint that pleaseth them to name." We

[1] Bottari, Rom. Sott., tom. i. pref. p. v.

owe an apology to our readers for setting before them such ribald trash as this; yet, since this is probably one of the earliest accounts that was ever published of the Catacombs, having been printed within twelve years of their accidental recovery, it is not uninteresting. "Without Rome," he continues, "there is a huge great vault which they call St. Priscilla's Grote; and within this vault there is a great many of several places, turning one this way, another that way, as in one street there may be divers streets and lanes turning every way; so that when they go into this vault, they tie the end of a line at the going in, and so go on by the line; else they might chance to lose themselves, and so miss of their coming out again; or else, if they have not a line, they take chalk with them, and make figures at every turning, that at their coming again (being guided by torchlight, for candle will go out with the damp in the vault), they make account till they get forth; but this is not so ready a way as by the line."[1]

John Evelyn, 1645.

The next appearance of the Catacombs in English literature was of a more respectable kind. John Evelyn, who visited Rome in 1645, was content simply to record what he saw or heard. He was first taken to the subterranean cemetery at St. Sebastian's, "where the Fulgentine monks have their monastery." "They led us down," he says, "into a grotto which they affirmed went divers furlongs under ground. The sides or walls which we passed were filled with bones and dead bodies, laid as it were on shelves, whereof some were shut up with broad stones, and now and then a crosse or a palme cut in them. At the end of some of these subterranean passages were square rooms with altars in them, said to have been the receptacles of primitive Christians in the times of persecution, nor seems it improbable." By and by, being detained in Rome longer than he expected, he was persuaded to visit another Catacomb. He says, "We took coach

[1] The English Romayne Life. Imprinted at London, anno 1590; reprinted in the Harleian Miscellany, vol. vii. p. 155, ed. 1811.

a little out of towne, to visit the famous Roma Sotterranea, being much like what we had seen at St. Sebastian's. Here, in a cornfield, guided by two torches, we crept on our bellies into a little hole, about twenty paces, which delivered us into a large entrie that led us into several streets or allies, a good depth in the bowells of the earth, a strange and fearefull passage for divers miles, as Bosio has measured and described them in his book. We ever and anon came into pretty square roomes, that seem'd to be chapells with altars, and some adorn'd with very ordinary ancient painting. Many skeletons and bodies are plac'd on the sides one above the other in degrees like shelves, whereof some are shut up with a coarse flat stone, having ingraven on them Pro Christo,[1] or a crosse and palmes, which are supposed to have been martyrs. Here, in all likelyhood, were the meetings of the primitive Christians during the persecutions, as Pliny the Younger describes them. As I was prying about, I found a glasse phiale, fill'd as was conjectured with dried blood, and two lachrymatories. Many of the bodies, or rather bones (for there appear'd nothing else), lay so entire as if plac'd by the art of the chirurgeon, but being only touch'd fell all to dust. Thus after wandering two or three miles in this subterranean mæander, we returned almost blind when we came into the daylight, and even choked by
Burnet, 1685. the smoke of the torches." [2] Bishop Burnet,[3] who visited the same scenes forty years later, wrote more in the style of Antony Munday. He reckoned upon his countrymen's religious prejudices, on the one hand, and their ignorance of Rome, on the other, with such confidence, that he hazarded the astounding statement that "those burying-places that are

[1] It would seem that neither Evelyn nor his guides knew Greek, for this is clearly their misinterpretation of the monogram ☧; and we are sorry to say that we have ourselves heard the same blunder from the lips of some modern English guides in the Catacombs.

[2] Evelyn's Memoirs, edited by Bray, 1819, pp. 153, 164.

[3] Some Letters from Italy and Switzerland in the Years 1685 and 1686. Rotterdam. P. 209.

graced with the pompous title of Catacombs are no other than the *puticoli* mentioned by Festus Pompeius, where the meanest sort of the Roman slaves were laid, and so without any further care about them were left to rot," and that the Christians did not come into possession of them until the fourth or fifth century. He was followed by some other writers in the same strain, as, for example, Misson, who, being unable to deny that Christians had certainly been buried here in very ancient times, only insisted that "this was no reason for excluding others from being interred there also, in those holes that were set apart for the dregs of the people."[1] Even these writers had some merit over others; they did not express an opinion till they had seen the places of which they wrote. Their foolish bigotry was surpassed by a German author, who in 1703 undertook to disprove all the statements of Bosio without ever having left his native town of Leipsic.

Misson, 1714.

The controversies which arose out of the falsehoods of ignorant or malicious writers like these contributed nothing to archæological science, and are not worthy of any detailed mention in this place. We repeat, therefore, that there is a blank of half a century in the literary history of the Catacombs, from Aringhi to Fabretti, who, in the year 1700, deserves our gratitude for having preserved the account of two cemeteries that had not been known to Bosio, together with the inscriptions which they contained. He had been appointed in 1688 *custode* of the Catacombs, and it belonged to his office to superintend the removal of any relics that might be discovered. In this post he was succeeded by Boldetti, who held it for more than thirty years, but who, unfortunately, did not possess sufficient knowledge or love of archæology to enable him to make the most of the great opportunities he enjoyed. During his time, whole regions of Roma Sotterranea were brought to light, galleries of tombs that had remained apparently unvisited since the last corpse was buried in them, a vast number of

Fabretti, 1700.

Boldetti, 1720.

[1] A New Voyage to Italy, &c. London, 1714. Vol. ii. part i. p. 166.

inscriptions, coins, and medals — some of them with dates, belonging to the first century — and other treasures, came under his notice; and yet it is doubtful whether any account of these things would have come down to us had he not been commanded to write in the defence of religion. Mabillon's anonymous letter "De Cultu Sanctorum Ignotorum" had attracted considerable attention, and the unfair use which had been made of it by Misson and other Protestant controversialists seemed to demand an answer. Boldetti was therefore desired to publish an account of the rules which had been followed by himself and his predecessors in the extraction of relics; and he accompanied this with a description of the discoveries that had been made in the Catacombs generally during his own time.[1] The object of his work, however, being not scientific, but religious and apologetic, its contents were arranged with this view, and its value as a contribution towards the complete history of the subterranean city of the dead was proportionably diminished.

Buonarroti, 1720.

Buonarroti, who had assisted Boldetti in the archæological part of his work, himself wrote a valuable book on the vessels or fragments of gilded glass found in the Catacombs[2] — a subject which has been handled afresh and with great erudition in our own day by Padre Garrucci, S.J.[3] The Jesuit Father Lupi made important additions to the science of Christian epigraphy, *à propos* of a curious inscription,[4] belonging to the year 269, which had been discovered in the cemetery where SS. Chrysanthus and Daria had been martyred. Another of Boldetti's assistants, Marangoni, who was officially associated

Marangoni, 1740.

[1] Osservazioni sopra i cimeteri dei SS. Martiri ed antichi Cristiani di Roma. Roma, 1720.

[2] Osservazioni sopra alcuni frammenti di vasi antichi di vetro ornati di figure trovati nei cimeteri di Roma. Firenze, 1716.

[3] Vetri ornati di figure in oro trovati nei cimiteri dei Cristiani primitivi di Roma raccolti e spiegati da Raffaele Garrucci, D.C.D.G. Roma, 1858.

[4] Dissertatio et animadversiones ad nuper inventum Severæ martyris epitaphium. Panormi, 1734. The inscription is published in "Epitaphs of the Catacombs," p. 19.

with him for twenty years in the guardianship of the cemeteries, seems to have intended to carry out Bosio's plan of making a minute and faithful report of every new discovery, arranged according to the historical and topographical outline laid down by that great man, and corrected by any new light thrown upon the subject by later discoveries. After he had continued this plan for about sixteen or seventeen years, an accidental fire destroyed all his papers. "Truly," says De Rossi, "the history which I am relating seems to be but an Iliad of misfortune and irreparable losses." The little that remained from this fire, together with the results of his subsequent labours, Marangoni published in the "Acta Sancti Victorini" in 1740.

From that day down to our own times, the Catacombs have been left almost in the same obscurity as that in which they were shrouded for so many centuries before the labours of Bosio. The "Roma Sotterranea" of Bottari,[1] published by command of Clement XII., was a mere republication of the plates from the work of Bosio, illustrated with great care and learning, but not arranged in any order, nor enriched by any additions, unless we reckon one which we could well have spared—viz., the paintings of a Gnostic sepulchre falsely attributed to the Christians. These have seriously perplexed and misled later authors, especially Raoul Rochette, who founded upon it in great measure his theory as to the origin of Christian art. Bottari, 1737.

The learned students of Christian archæology who flourished during the latter half of the last century, such as Mamachi, Olivieri, Zaccaria, Borgia, &c., made considerable use of the works of Bosio, Aringhi, Boldetti, and Bottari in their treatises on various points of Christian antiquity, but not one of them appears to have explored for himself, or even to have Latter part of eighteenth century.

[1] Sculture e Pitture Sacre estratte dai Cimiteri di Roma, pubblicate gia dagli autori della Roma Sotterranea ed ora nuovamente date in luce colle spiegazioni. Roma, 1737–54.

taken any notice of the new discoveries that were being made year by year in some part of the ancient cemeteries. Benedict XIV., by founding the Christian Museum in the Vatican Library, and collecting there some of the inscriptions that had hitherto been dispersed among various churches, conferred a great benefit upon antiquarian students, but did not encourage them to examine the places where these inscriptions had been found; and even such an archæologist as Marini does not appear to have thought it worth while to visit the Catacombs themselves. Seroux d'Agincourt,[1] indeed, penetrated their recesses to find materials for his history of the decline of the fine arts; and, by attempting to detach the pictures from the walls of living rock on which they had been painted, taught the modern *fossors* the last lesson in the art of destruction. The attempt signally failed, and was not long persisted in, but it resulted in the ruin of many precious monuments which can never be replaced.[2]

Christian Museum founded by Benedict XIV.

D'Agincourt, 1780–86.

Devastations in the Catacombs.

Indeed, it is truly lamentable to see what a record of destruction the history of the Catacombs has been, almost ever since their re-opening in the sixteenth century. The paintings which were seen at that time in the crypts on the Via Salaria by Baronius and others had been destroyed when Bosio revisited the place fifteen years afterwards. Marangoni barely rescued from the hands of the mason, who was proceeding to saw it in pieces, that beautiful inscription of Pope Damasus in honour of St. Agnes which may now be read on the staircase by which we descend to her Basilica. Padre Mazzolari, S.J., the pious author of the "Vie Sacre," was only just in time to traverse the gallery accidentally opened near San Lorenzo in 1779, before he saw the work of devastation ruthlessly accomplished under his very eyes. The lessons of destruction taught by D'Agincourt have been occasionally followed in our own day; and we need hardly add, that, in the present political

[1] Histoire de l'Art. Paris, 1823.

[2] The same thing had been done, in one instance at least, by Boldetti.

condition of Rome, the makers of railways and some other excavators have been even less scrupulous. The vast extent of subterranean territory to be guarded from injury, and the facility with which access may from time to time be gained to the Catacombs in consequence of accidental openings in the soil, made it always difficult for the authorities to prevent depredations; still this does not explain or excuse the absence of what surely might have been looked for in Rome—a continual succession of antiquarians able and willing to transmit to posterity a faithful record of each new discovery as it was made.

At the beginning of the present century, tokens of a reviving interest in the subject may be traced in some of the proceedings of the Roman Archæological Society, and in a few other writings.[1] It was the late Padre Marchi, S.J., however, who had succeeded Settele as *custode* of the Catacombs, who gave the first great impulse to that lively interest in them which is now so generally felt. In 1841 he commenced a great work on the Monuments of early Christian Art.[2] It is almost needless to enter upon any detailed examination of the labours of this learned Jesuit, since they were interrupted and finally abandoned, partly in consequence of the political vicissitudes of the times, by which his own Order was especially affected; and partly because he was conscious that the work of rehabilitating (so to say) these venerable monuments of antiquity, and setting them forth before the public in their original integrity, was necessarily reserved for one who should come after him. He had begun to publish prematurely; at most he had but broken the soil. He had, however, imparted his own enthusiasm to one of his scholars, who was at first the frequent companion

Padre Marchi, S.J., A.D. 1841.

[1] Settele and Visconti in Atti della Pontif. Academ. d'Archeol., tom. ii. pp. 43, 611; and Raoul-Rochette in Memoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xiii.

[2] Monumenti delle arti Cristiane Primitive nella Metropoli del Cristianesimo. Roma, 1844. Only the first volume (on architecture) was ever published.

of his subterranean exploring expeditions, whom he soon recognised as a valuable fellow-labourer, and whom he finally urged in the most pressing manner to undertake the work which he found too great for his own failing strength. This scholar was

De Rossi.

De Rossi, of whom it were hard to say whether his talent, learning, and industry have done more for the work of discovery in subterranean Rome, or the discoveries he has made done more for the increase of our knowledge of it. A single fact as to the fruits of his labour will speak more than any panegyric as to their value. The fact we allude to is this, that whereas before his time only two or three important historical monuments[1] had been discovered in the Catacombs during more than two centuries of examination—and all of these the result of accident,—the excavations directed by the Commission of Sacred Archæology, established by Pius IX. in 1851, and of which De Rossi is one of the most active members, have brought to light within a few years nine or ten historical monuments of the utmost value, and in almost every instance he had announced beforehand with more or less accuracy what was to be expected.

His system of research.

We are naturally led to inquire into the cause of so great a contrast. From what new sources had De Rossi derived his information? or what was his new system for extracting ore from old mines?

No doubt a great deal is due to his immense learning, both in sacred and profane antiquity; much also to his excellent abilities, especially his marvellous power of induction, if one ought not rather to call it almost a gift of divination; but we believe that he is indebted for his wonderful success still more

[1] The baptistery and paintings of SS. Abdon and Sennen, and other crypts in the Cemetery of Ponziano, on the Via Portuensis, discovered in 1619 by Bosio; the crypt of SS. Felix, Adauctus, and Emerita, discovered by Marangoni, behind the Basilica of St. Paul's, on the road leading to St. Sebastian's, in 1720; and the tomb, the original epitaph, and the *body* of St. Hyacinth, found in the Cemetery of St. Hermes, by Padre Marchi, in 1845. (See Note B. in Appendix.)

to the admirable method which he pursues. This consists in the most minute and laborious examination of every detail, whether of construction or of ornamentation, in the Catacombs themselves, combined with a no less patient study of ancient MSS. and historical documents of every kind. De Rossi has laboured almost as much in critical researches among books as in the analysis of material monuments; and the one study has, in many ways, greatly assisted the other. The masonry, the marks and names on the tiles, the quality of the plaster (where any has been used), the mode of execution and artistic style of the paintings, and the choice of subjects, the use of stucco, or of mosaics, the use of sarcophagi, whether of marble or of terra-cotta, the form of the graves, whether mere shelves in the wall or larger square-headed or arched recesses, the language, style, symbols, names, writing and spelling of the inscriptions,—these are the solid and exact bases on which he has conducted his analysis below ground; and the acuteness, learning, and industry with which he has sought and interpreted MSS. throughout the chief libraries of Europe have not been less admirable. The results attained by these two systems of investigation combined have been truly amazing; and even more valuable than the several discoveries and identification of important monuments which he has thus been enabled to make, is the fact that he has succeeded in establishing certain chronological canons, which are daily more and more confirmed by experience, and by which everything else of a similar kind found elsewhere may now be infallibly tested. For, as he himself says, speaking of earlier works on Christian archæology, the misfortune was, that even those monuments which had been most copiously illustrated with abundant quotations from ancient writers, nevertheless almost always remained in a state of hopeless uncertainty as to their precise date, their *rapports* with history, with the development of the Christian society, its arts, and its whole history, both external and internal. In order to arrive at that precision which assigns to each monu-

ment its date, and consequently its value, and so becomes the best guarantee also of the correctness of its interpretation, "I have been obliged," he says, "to make a very long route indeed, and to undertake the minute and immense analysis which had discouraged all who have gone before me. I have studied the inscriptions, the paintings, and the sculptures, not separately, nor according to a classification predetermined upon, but in their original positions, and considered in their relations to one another."

Thanks to the intelligent and the indefatigable assistance of his brother, a practical mathematician and a geologist, he has had before him a complete analysis of all the subterranean galleries, of all the chambers on the various levels, of the staircases or other means of communication between them, and even the measurement of thousands upon thousands of the graves. And at first he was content only to register these facts, without combining them, lest some premature effort in this direction should tempt him to form a system which would so occupy his mind as to render it less open to impressions from other facts that might be discovered later, and offer some apparent contradiction to the system too hastily adopted. By and by, the time came when he must needs examine his vast accumulation of facts, compare them one with another, and draw deductions from them. And those who have made a conscientious study of his volumes can bear testimony to the cautious moderation with which these deductions have been generally made. Often indeed there is scarcely any process of deduction at all; the facts speak for themselves. It is a subject of real wonder to see how spontaneously light and order have sometimes seemed to come out of apparent chaos, simply by an intelligent gaze upon the vast mass of *data*, so important and so scrupulously exact, which De Rossi's singular zeal and patience during five and thirty years have succeeded in bringing together.

From what we have said, it is clear that De Rossi has fol-

lowed in the main the same general plan as had been originally laid down by Bosio; he has studied also the same ancient authorities, but with the addition of two or three more of immense value,[1] which in Bosio's time lay buried in the MSS. of libraries. These new authorities had been known also to Father Marchi, but then he had not adopted Bosio's topographical system. Moreover, the particular object which he had proposed to himself led him precisely in the opposite direction from that to which these new guides offered to conduct him. They were, as we have seen, veritable guides, written in the seventh and eighth centuries by pilgrims from foreign countries, who carefully put on record all the sacred places which they visited in Rome. Especially they enumerated all the tombs of the martyrs, as they lay each in his first resting-place in the different suburban cemeteries. Now these were the precise spots in the Catacombs where St. Damasus and other Popes had made many material changes. They had built spacious staircases to conduct the pilgrims immediately to the object of their visit; opened more *luminaria* to supply light and air, widened the galleries or added vestibules to the chapels, or raised small basilicas above ground; and for the support of these, solid substructions of masonry had been sometimes necessary in the crypts themselves. But when the Catacombs ceased to be used, not only were all these works left to perish by a process of natural decay, they also attracted the greedy hand of the spoiler, so that after the lapse of seven or eight hundred years every centre of historic interest had become a mass of ruins. Whereas, then, it was the special desire of Father Marchi to recover, if possible, galleries and chambers of the Catacombs in their primitive condition as first they were hewn out of the rocks, any appearance of bricks and mortar in the way of his excavation was sufficient to turn him aside from that part of the cemetery altogether. De Rossi, on the other hand, shrewdly judged that the crypts which had been

Peculiarity of De Rossi's method as distinct from that of F. Marchi.

[1] See pp. 523–525.

changed into sanctuaries contained the very key, as it were, to the history of each catacomb. Wherever one of these could be recovered and identified, he had a certain clue to the name and history of the cemetery in which it was found. He hailed, therefore, every token of ruined masonry in the heart of a catacomb with the keenest delight, as a sure sign that he was in the immediate neighbourhood of what he most desired to see; and the results have abundantly proved that he was not mistaken in his reasoning.

De Rossi's sources of information.

Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that this branch of Christian archæology has now by his means been brought so completely within the domain of science, that at this moment there is hardly any group of ancient monuments which can be classified so exactly and their history established so perfectly as the Roman Catacombs. The labour which it has cost him to do this can only be appreciated by those who take the pains to follow him through the slow, deliberate, sometimes almost wearisome, method of his operations, and examine in detail the mass of minute criticisms by which he insists upon justifying every step which he takes; and for this it is indispensable that the whole work should be read exactly as he has himself written it. Many threads of his argument are so subtle, yet so strong and so necessary to the establishment of his conclusions, that they can neither be omitted nor reproduced in any compressed form without injury to their substance. These, therefore, we must perforce leave untouched; nevertheless, we hope to be able to extract from his pages sufficient matter to set before our readers an intelligible account of the history of the Catacombs, supported both by the language of ancient documents and by the remains which his researches have enabled us to see and examine for ourselves. And to those readers who only desire to gain the latest information on the subject this will be enough; but "to him who wishes honestly to examine the evidence for each discovery, nothing will supply the place of a perusal of the original exposition, either in pro-

found interest or in the abiding conviction it will produce. . . . In this way we, as it were, accompany him through the successive labours, the brilliant inductions, the startling verifications of a career which has been full of results. We see the morning twilight, then the first streak of dawn, then the full brightness of day. His work possesses, too, that peculiar fascination exercised by minds of the highest order alone. It is not more remarkable for bold and original thinking than for profound and varied learning, for extreme calmness and caution. And it is important to insist upon this, because some of his conclusions have not been arrived at without much conjecture, without many inferences on very delicate evidence indeed, the weighing of which depends upon that subtle diagnosis which is the essential difference of a great and skilled observer." This is the language of a modern scholar,[1] when speaking of the fragments of ancient history and literature that have been rescued from oblivion by means of Champillon's interpretation of Egyptian hieroglyphics; but we know of none that would describe more accurately both the charm and the value of De Rossi's Roma Sotterranea.

It remains that we should say a few words about the trustworthiness of the author whose discoveries and conclusions we are commending to the acceptance of the English public. For in a subject of this kind, which necessarily trenches in some points on matters of religious controversy, it is important that the reader should have confidence in the absolute candour and impartiality of his guide. De Rossi himself tells us that his plan has been (in obedience to the express will of the Holy Father, by whose orders the work was published), to record everything he has seen fully and accurately. And none know better how faithfully he has followed this plan than those who have studied his pages until they found cause to complain of the prolixity of his narrative, registering even every fragment of stone that he meets with if it have but a few letters upon it,

[1] Prolegomena to Ancient History. By Rev. J. P. Mahaffy.

though it be impossible to elicit from them a single grain of information. It is in testimony to his unimpeachable integrity no less than to his profound learning that the chief universities of Europe and America have conferred upon him their highest honours and degrees. And it would be easy to produce a number of witnesses upon this point from the ranks of the most undoubted Protestantism. Thus, Mommsen, the learned historian of Rome, whose distance from the Catholic faith may be measured by his attack on the historical veracity of St. Luke, speaks of De Rossi as an author on the Roman Catacombs "as conscientious as he is acute."[1] When some of his statements were called in question in high quarters in Berlin, precisely because they rested only on the evidence of "a Catholic, whose labour in the Catacombs was subject to no control," the learned Prussian archæologist, Henzen, secretary to the Imperial Archæological Society in Rome, at once came forward to defend the scientific integrity of his associate, and declared that "his well-known character and exclusive devotion to the cause of truth placed his testimony above all suspicion."[2] In France, M. Charles de Remusat bears testimony to his "perfect integrity, which inspires every confidence."[3] In our own country, Mr. Burgon, the Dean of Chichester, says of his researches, that they have been "conducted with a sincere zeal for truth;" and of his conversation, that it was such as "to inspire perfect confidence in his statements."[4] Lastly, the late Mr. Wharton Marriott, whilst writing bitterly about Roman controversialists generally, says of De Rossi, that "he has the rare merit of stating his facts exactly and impartially, precisely as he finds them,"[5] and that he "writes in a spirit of loyal devotion to the truth, and the truth alone, such as others, differing widely from him in doctrinal prepossessions, might well desire to imitate."[6]

[1] Im Neuen Reich, 1871.
[2] Revue des Sociétés Savantes, Fevrier, 1868.
[3] Revue des Deux Mondes, Juin, 1863. [4] Letters from Rome, p. 139.
[5] Testimony of the Catacombs, &c., p. 3. [6] Vestiarium Christianum, p. 6.

BOOK II.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CATACOMBS.

CHAPTER I.

ROMAN LAWS AND CUSTOMS AFFECTING BURIAL.

High value set on funeral rites by ancient Romans, and sacred character attributed to places of burial, even of slaves and criminals—Provision made in Roman wills for certain funeral rites and feasts at the tombs on fixed days—Name and nature of these feasts—Not peculiar to Rome—Rooms built for the purpose—Hence extensive area for Roman tombs—Carefully measured.

EVERY student of classical literature knows how great importance was attached to the due performance of burial, and of all other rites connected with the dead, by the most civilised nations of antiquity. In Rome (with which alone we are at present concerned) they were even allowed to take precedence of the exigencies of the public service. The very strictness of military discipline gave way before them; so that a soldier could claim leave of absence, not only for the funeral of a deceased relative, but also for the *feriæ denicales*, or feast of the purification of the family nine days afterwards, because the laws of the Pontifices did not allow these ceremonies to be postponed.[1]

High value set on funeral rites by ancient Romans,

[1] Bouchè Leclercq's Pontifes de l'Ancienne Rome, p. 116.

and sacred character attributed to places of burial.

The same laws assigned a quasi-religious character to the place of burial. We say of *burial*, because, although the common practice in Rome at the beginning of the Christian era, and for some time previously, was to burn the bodies of the dead rather than to bury them, yet interment had been the more ancient usage, and by some of the noble families was never abandoned. Moreover, the Pontifices, whilst recognising and tolerating cremation, yet would not acknowledge a funeral of this kind to be complete, nor the place where the ashes lay to be entitled to their special protection, until at least a single bone, either cut off from the corpse or rescued from the flames (*os resectum*, or *exceptum*), had been deposited in the earth.[1] When this had been done, or when the whole body had been interred, the tomb became invested with a certain sacred character. It did not, indeed, become really *sacer* in the strictest sense of the term, for this could only be effected by all the ceremonies of a ritual consecration, but it became, in the technical language of the time, *religiosus;*[2] and one of the chief consequences of the peculiar character which henceforth attached to it was its exemption from many of the laws which regulated the tenure or transfer of ordinary property. Thus, it could never become the lawful possession of a man by mere prescription. It was forbidden to sell, exchange, mortgage, or otherwise alienate such places from the families of those who had been buried in them. Even when the whole estate was sold, any *loca religiosa* there might be upon it did not pass with the rest of the purchase, and there always remained to the family of the vendors the right of access to the tombs.[3] Doubt-

They become *religiosa*,

and thereby invested with certain privileges.

[1] "Priusquam in os injecta gleba est, locus ille, ubi crematum est corpus, nihil habet religionis."—*Cicero, de Legibus*, ii. 22.

[2] "Religiosum locum unusquisque suâ voluntate facit, dum mortuum infert in locum suum."—*Marcian, Digest.*, i. 8, 664.

[3] "Vendito fundo, religiosa loca ad emptorem non transeunt."—*Pauli Sentent.*, I. xxi. 7. "Utimur eo jure ut dominus fundorum in quibus sepulchra fuerint, etiam post venditos fundos adeundorum sepulchrorum sit jus."—*Digest.*, xlvii. 12, 5. See the indignant language of Cicero in an instance of refusal of this right (*pro Roscio Amerino*, 9).

less, in times of war, and especially during any prolonged period of civil disturbance, these rights were not always strictly observed, but the law at least remained always the same; and that the laws were often put in force, we have the evidence of several contemporary inscriptions. We will give a single example.

Example.

An inscription, found in the kingdom of Naples, records at length the details of a transfer of property which really included sepulchres, but where an attempt had been made to evade the law by means of levelling the ground and removing all tokens of the use to which it had been put. It was even expressly declared in the deed of sale that there were no sepulchres in the place. But when the judges had satisfied themselves, by personal inspection, of the fraud that had been perpetrated, they declared the contract to be null and void from the beginning; the purchaser was sentenced to suffer forfeiture of the field, "in punishment for his contempt of religion," and the heirs of the vendor were required to refund the purchase money (together with compound interest at a very high rate) by way of fine "for neglect of reverence due to sepulchres." It was further decreed that the field should be henceforth public property, and be set apart for the burial of soldiers of a particular regiment (which is named), and that the fine inflicted on the vendors should be spent for the benefit of these same soldiers, for whom it seems that provision had hitherto been made both in sickness and in death by means of public subscription.[1]

O.H., 4405.

The graves even of slaves and criminals were thus privileged.

Nor was this jealous guardianship over the tombs of the dead confined to those of the rich and noble: it extended equally even to the burial-place of a slave, provided (of course) that the burial had been made with the consent of the owner of the land.[2] Nay, further still, even the graves of those who had forfeited their lives to the law might claim a similar protection,

[1] Mommsen, Inscr. Reg. Neap., 2646. Other examples may be seen in Orelli's Inscript. Select., 2145, 4423–4428, 4549, &c.

[2] "Locus in quo servus sepelitur religiosus est."—*Digest.*, xi. 7, 2.

if the corpse had been given up after execution for burial; and this was an act of mercy which Roman as well as Grecian law ordinarily conceded when it was asked for.[1] "In the absence of contrary evidence," says a recent writer,[2] "it is certain that the criminal's body was restored to his relatives when death had been officially testified, and the funeral obsequies were decently and privately performed by his family. . . . Yet we have some cases mentioned by Lysias when there was added to the sentence of death the refusal of funeral rites." And, just so, both Roman lawyers and ecclesiastical historians[3] tell us of certain exceptions that were sometimes made to the general provision of the law in Rome; but these exceptions were comparatively rare. Under ordinary circumstances, all tombs whatever, whether of freemen or of slaves, citizens or strangers, heroes or criminals, were under the guardianship of the Pontifices, whose special office it was to distinguish between what was sacred and profane,[4] and to enforce the practical observance of the distinction.

Power of Pontifices.

Hence their official protectorate of tombs was far from being a sinecure. It was not lawful, for example, without their express permission, to transfer a body that had once been duly buried from one tomb to another;[5] neither might any existing monument be taken down and rebuilt, or even repaired if falling into decay, without the same sanction.[6] Moreover, it was their duty to punish all who violated the integrity of a sepulchre; and this could be done in many ways—either by breaking it open and introducing the corpse of a stranger, by removing any statue, stone, or column, or by erasing an inscription.

[1] "Corpora animadversorum quibuslibet petentibus ad sepulturam danda sunt."—*Digest.*, xlviii. 24, 3.

[2] Rev. J. P. Mahaffy, in his "Social Life in Greece."

[3] Ulpian and Paulus in Digest., *l. c.* Euseb., H. E. v. 1, sec. 54–58.

[4] Macrobius iii. 3, 1.

[5] Pliny, Epist. x. 76.

[6] "Pontifices explorare debent quatenus salvâ religione desiderio reficiendi operis medendum sit."—*Digest.*, xi. 8, 5, 1. For examples which testify to their watchful diligence in this matter, see Orelli's Inscript. Select., 4370, 4406, 4515, 7331.

The penalties for offences of this kind were very severe. The culprits might be put to death, banished, or condemned to labour in the mines, according to the degree of heinousness of the crime and the social position of the criminal.[1]

Provision made in Roman wills for certain sepulchral rites and feasts at the tombs on fixed days.

A knowledge of these details enables us better to appreciate the feelings which led the wealthy Romans to bestow so much care and attention upon all that concerned their burial and the keeping alive of their names and memories after death. They not only selected during life the place where they would be buried, but prescribed in their wills the exact form and cost of the monument that should be erected there, or they prepared the monument during their own lifetime. They also appointed certain days on which visits should be paid to the tomb, and left money to defray, wholly or in part, the expense of the entertainments that were to be given on these occasions, nothing doubting but that in this way, under the watchful guardianship of the Pontifices, their memory would live for ever. We will quote the principal clauses of one or two of these wills, by way of example, for they concern the subject we have in hand more closely than at first sight appears.

Examples.

Fragments of an old Pagan will, engraved on stone, were found outside the Porta Labicana of Rome, near the Claudian Aqueduct, in 1831. This will disposes of "certain gardens, together with a house and vineyards, all enclosed within a wall, and situated between the first and second milestone on the left-hand side of the Via Labicana as you go out of the city." T. Flavius Syntrophus, the testator, bequeaths this property, together with all the furniture of whatsoever kind that may be found there at the time of his death, to one of his freedmen, on condition that nothing shall be done either by himself or his heirs to interfere with the following arrangement. It was to be held in trust for the benefit of all the testator's freed men and women, both those already freed and those who should hereafter be freed by this will or its codicils; the revenue was to be

O.H., 7321.

[1] Digest., xlvii. 12, 11; Pauli Sent., ii. 13.

divided equally between them all, provided they offered the usual sacrifices at his tomb at the appointed time, and assembled there on the 22d March, the day for sprinkling violets on his grave (*dies violationis*),[1] on the 21st May, the day for sprinkling roses (*dies rosationis*), and the 30th December, the testator's birthday. If any of these freedmen wished to occupy the house, he was at liberty to do so with the consent of the rest, or at least the majority of them; and the rent of the house and the profits of the rest of the property, whatever should remain after the expenses had been provided for the feasts on the appointed days of meeting and the proper preservation of the monument, should be divided between the legatees. The survivor of them was to take care by his last will and testament that his heirs should pass in like manner into the family of the testator, so as continually to keep alive his name and memory.

The provisions of another will, once engraved on marble on a Roman sepulchre at Langres, and copied from the original by some of Alcuin's scholars in the eighth or ninth century,[2] are still more curious and apt for the illustration of our subject. This document opens with an order for the completion of the monument (*cella memoriæ*) which the testator had already begun. It was to be finished in exact accordance with the plan he should leave behind. In it were to be set up two

[1] This seems to have been the day usually, if not uniformly, chosen for the *violatio;* the day of the *rosatio* was more variable—in May, June, or July. The classical reader will call to mind the *purpureos flores* on the tomb of Anchises and the shade of Marcellus (Virg., Æn., v. 79, vi. 885), and the statement of Pliny (Hist. Nat., xxi. 8, 10) that the Romans scarcely used any flowers for crowns but violets and roses, and that these crowns were not only for the honour of the gods and the *lares*, public and private, but also *sepulcrorum et Manium*. Compare also St. Jerome's letter to Pammachius (Ep. xxi.), in which he speaks of "other husbands scattering on their wives' graves violets, roses, lilies, and purple flowers;" and the charge brought against the Christians by Cæcilius (Minuc. Fel. Oct., cap. 2), *coronas sepulcris denegatis*.

[2] Two pages of this copy have been discovered in the binding of a MS. of the tenth century, in the library at Basle. Bullettino, i. p. 95.

statues[1] of himself, of a certain prescribed height, the one in bronze, the other in marble; and in front, an altar[2] of the finest Carrara marble, in which his bones should be laid. Careful provision was to be made for the easy opening and shutting of this chamber, and an inscription was to be set up outside, giving the date of the building and the age of the testator when he died. Couches and benches were also to be provided for those days on which the chamber was to be opened, and even garments for the guests. Orchards and other property are assigned for the proper maintenance and repair of the sepulchre, which is left in charge of two freedmen (who are named). The orchards are to be cultivated and looked after by three gardeners and their apprentices (*discentibus eorum*), and to each of the three the testator's nephew and heir shall pay sixty *modii* of corn every year, besides half that quantity in lieu of clothes. Nobody shall ever have dominion over this property for any other end than to improve its cultivation and carry out more effectually the provisions of this will. Everybody shall be allowed to have access to it who comes with the intention of paying it due honour and respect (*ad id colendum*), whether he come on foot or in a carriage. If at any time the heir allows anything to be done at the tomb contrary to the provisions of this will—*e.g.*, allows any stranger to be buried or burnt here,—he shall forfeit a sum equal to about £830 of our money to the public treasury of the town (of Langres), and this shall hold good against all future owners of the property. All freed men or women to whom the testator has given liberty, either during his life or by his last will and testament, shall contribute a small sum yearly, to which the

[1] This testamentary provision appears on a large number of Latin inscriptions in Spain. Corp. Lat. Inscr., ii. 1055, 1065, 1350, &c.

[2] This word was in common use to denote a Pagan tomb. "*Aramque sepulchri* congerere arboribus," says Virgil, Æn., vi. 178. It is found on inscriptions *O. H.*, 4521, 4522, 7357, 7358, &c. Tertullian reproaches the Pagans, "*Aras mortuis vestris confertis.*"—Apol., c. 13. It was strictly correct, as offerings of wine, milk, &c., were made upon the tomb.

testator's nephew and heir shall add more, and out of this money meat and drink were to be provided, to be consumed at the tomb on the annual celebration of the deceased's birthday; sacrifices also were to be offered on the tomb on the first day of every month, from April to October inclusively.

Name and nature of these feasts.

It would be easy to produce other examples, but these are sufficient for our present purpose. They show that, besides the general public holiday (*Feralia*) which was set apart in Rome for the purpose of visiting the tombs of the dead and celebrating the customary feasts and sacrifices there, and which was observed by the whole people simultaneously from the 13th to the 22d February, each family had (or might have) private celebrations of a similar kind in memory of its own deceased members, and these would be held on any day or days that the testator might appoint, by whose liberality they were mainly supported. In the *Feralia* the feast was specially celebrated on the last day, which was called *Caristia*, or *Cara cognatio*, because the relatives used to meet on that day and reconcile, if possible, all disagreements before partaking of the common meal. Of the nature of the meal we do not know much. It was called by two very different names, or at least names which suggest and have received very different interpretations—the one *silicernium*, supposed to have reference to the silence of the Manes, in whose presence and honour it was held; the other *alogia*, interpreted by St. Augustine[1] of the irrational intemperance and excess with which it was sometimes accompanied. Certainly silence was not imposed upon those who partook of the feast: they were often expressly exhorted to be merry and glad (*hilares*), to eat and drink and refresh themselves, without anger, strife, or melancholy—*sine bile, sine querelâ.*

R.S., iii. 477. *C.I.L.*, i. p. 386.

The celebration of social or family festivals among the

[1] "Alogiatur cum epulis indulgetur, ut a rationis tramite devietur."—*St. Aug., Ep. xxxvi. ad Casulanum.*

tombs of the dead was no invention of the Romans: it had been known both to the Greeks and the Etruscans. Indeed, it is thought that the vestibule and central hall which form such striking features in the old Etruscan tombs at Cære, Cortona, and elsewhere, were originally designed for the accommodation of the guests on these occasions, who would sit surrounded by the smaller cells in which the dead had been laid for their last rest in couches. The tombs of Pagan Rome were not characterised by any such unity of design. For the most part, they were not laboriously excavated in the sides of hills as in Etruria, but built alongside the principal highroads; and room was provided for the social gatherings near the tomb, sometimes in one way, sometimes in another. In the will which we have quoted of the citizen of Langres, the room is called an *exedra*, and formed part of the monument itself, the altar being in front of it. In some instances the monument was constructed of two stories, the lower being occupied by the sarcophagus or the *olla* containing the ashes of the dead, and the upper reserved for the use of the living. In some inscriptions this "upper chamber" is simply called by this name, *ædificium superpositum*, and its purpose is clearly defined—"to celebrate together the memory of those who lie there"—*cubiculum superiorem ad confrequentandam memoriam quiescentium.* In others it is called *solarium*,[1] a terrace exposed to the light and warmth of the sun, whereas the lower room or monument was excavated (in part, at least, if not altogether) below the level of the soil. It was also called *pergula*, a name still retained in Italy for places where one may sit and dine *al fresco*, enjoying the fresh air, but protected from the heat by a trellis-work covered with vines and creeping flowers; and a *triclinium* of this kind has been found among the tombs at Pompeii. Still more frequently, a separate building, *apparatorium*, *ædicula*, *taberna*, was provided in the immediate neighbourhood of the sepulchre.

Not peculiar to Rome.

Rooms built specially for them.

O.H., 4386. *R.S.*, iii. p. 474.

R.S., iii. 474.

O.H., 4323.

O.H., 4433. 4085. 4513. 4353.

[1] "Solarium tectum junctum in quo populus . . . epuletur."—*O. H.*, 2417.

Hence large area for Roman tombs.

No doubt this was one of the reasons why the Roman sepulchres took up so much room, varying indeed immensely, according to the wealth and taste of the deceased, but always largely in excess of modern requirements. We find Cicero[1] proposing that an area of forty feet square should be assigned for the burial-place of one who had died in the service of the State. A hundred or a hundred and twenty feet each way seems to have been considered quite a moderate-sized area. Horace speaks of one which measured 1000 feet by 300. A marble slab, discovered some years ago closing the mouth of a grave in a catacomb on the Via Labicana, gives the measurement of 1800 feet by 500. Other inscriptions assign one *jugerum*, or four, or even ten *jugera* to a single tomb. On all tombstones later than the middle of the reign of Augustus, these measurements are carefully inscribed. Certain letters and figures announce the precise amount of land belonging to each monument; IN FR. P. [so many], IN AG. P. [so many], *i.e.*, so many feet of frontage against the road, and so many running back into the field. Perhaps the necessity for thus accurately recording the measurements may have been connected with the privilege, which, as we have already explained, belonged to land that was set aside for purposes of burial. It is true that not the whole of the area that might be assigned to a sepulchre became on that account *religiosus;* this character attached, strictly speaking, only to the actual space occupied by the monument;[2] still it was in the power of the testator to declare that such and such houses, or gardens, or other property, should be for ever attached to their sepulchre, and the revenues devoted to its support. "These gardens shall always serve my ashes. I shall appoint guardians to feast on my birthday on the income from them, and to throw roses on my tomb. I

C.I.L., vi. 1396. *O.H.*, 4349. 4369. 4371.

Accurately measured.

C.I.L., v. 843. *O.H.*, 4417. 4507.

[1] Philipp. ix. 7.

[2] "Non totus qui sepulturæ destinatus est locus religiosus sit, sed quatenus corpus humatum est."—*Celsus in Digest.*, xi. 765.

will that they be never divided nor alienated." "This little house and all that is above it shall by no means be separated from this sacred and religious spot." "These buildings I have prepared, made, and dedicated, as belonging to my sepulchre, and to the urns of ashes which are in them."

CHAPTER II.

PAGAN BURIAL-CLUBS.

Burial of the middle and poorer classes, sometimes provided by charity; more commonly by means of burial-clubs, which were allowed even when other clubs were forbidden—Number and constitution of these burial-clubs—How maintained—Examples of their statutes and their names.

Burial of the middle and poorer classes,

IT is obvious that the particulars recorded in the last chapter concern mainly the tombs and funerals of the more wealthy citizens of imperial Rome. But for our own purpose, it is almost more necessary that we should learn what was the practice of the humbler classes with reference to the same particular. When we call to mind the general treatment of slaves and of the poor in old heathen society, we shall not be surprised to learn that many of these met with no more decent burial than was given to dogs or other brute beasts; that there were open pits in an unfrequented part of the city into which the dead bodies of such persons were often cast, together with the carcasses of animals, and there, "without any further care about them, left to rot." Still, there must always have been a vast interval between the wealth of a Lucullus or a Mæcenas and the abject poverty of the dregs of the people, and we wish to inquire what was the mode of burial adopted by the vast multitudes who occupied the intermediate steps of the social scale; how these provided for the due performance of the funeral rites.

Comparatively few even of the wealthier class were selfish enough to provide such costly monuments as we have described, and the means of perpetuating the memory of their names by annual feasts, absolutely for themselves alone. Though

instances of such exclusiveness are to be met with, yet the ordinary tenor of the epitaphs is something of this kind—"I, A. B., made this for myself and my wife, and my sister, and their friends and posterity;" "for myself and my wife, and two places for two dear friends, and for all my other relations;" "for myself and my freedwoman, and all my relatives;" "for myself and my wife, Ælia Sophias, and my sons, and Aurelius Mercurius, my brother, together with his sons, and Ulpius Secundinus, my brother-in-law, with his sons; for my brothers; for my father's freedmen and freedwomen, and for my own; and for the descendants of all of these; and for those to whom during my lifetime I shall have given burial-places here." Even this last inscription, spite of its unusual prolixity, confines the right of burial within certain well-defined limits; and it is not uncommon to find exceptions made even within these limits, *e.g.*, "to all my freedmen and freedwomen, except the freedwoman Phlegusa, to whom access to this monument shall not be given;" or, "except . . . who shall not be allowed to come near my monument, either living or dead." On the other hand, there are just one or two inscriptions which testify to a wider and more comprehensive benevolence, extending the gift of a place of burial beyond the limits of the family, and of that circle, whether large or small, of which *I* is the centre. There is a monumental inscription of a freedman of Hadrian, buried at Ostia, which states that he had provided a sepulchre for himself, for his freedmen *et misericordiæ*, words which it does not seem possible to interpret in any other way than as denoting that it was his intention to allow others also to make use of it who could not afford to provide burial-places for themselves. Another inscription of one Bæbius Gemellus, a native of Sessina, a small town at the foot of the Apennines, distinctly says that he bequeathed places of gratuitous burial for a hundred of his poorer fellow-citizens. It does not appear how the favoured individuals were to be selected; the testator himself excludes those who had sold themselves to be gladia-

C.I.L., v. 3395. 8361, 8444.

I.R.N., 6570. *O.H.*, 7343.

sometimes provided by charity;

O.H., 7344.

O.H., 4404.

tors, those who had followed a disgraceful profession during life, and those who had committed suicide.

O.H., 4358.

Such rare acts of benevolence as these could benefit only a few. Others purchased for themselves, at no great cost, a right of property in one of the niches in a public *columbarium;* or still more frequently, a whole family would buy a certain number of these niches—a whole row, or two rows, or three—that so, though they had no private burial-place of their own, they might still not be separated in death. The great bulk, however, of the middle and poorer classes secured for themselves a decent burial and a last resting-place by means of mutual co-operation. It is said that the Roman soldiers used to make regular contributions out of their pay for this purpose,[1] and it is certain that members of the various trades and professions established each their own burial-clubs.

more commonly by means of burial-clubs,

This is a matter which has so important a bearing on the history of the Catacombs that we must dwell upon it at some length. We need not indeed trace the whole history of voluntary associations from the very foundations of the city; it will be enough that we take it up as we find it in the last days of the Republic. It was towards the end of the seventh century of her existence, B.C. 64, that Rome first saw the right of private association interfered with by direct legislation. At the instance of Cæsar, the Senate passed a decree abolishing a great number of *collegia* (as they were called), and hampering the freedom of meeting of others. Only those were tolerated which could plead immemorial prescription, or at least a venerable antiquity, or could prove that they had received due legal sanction. Not long afterwards Clodius re-established them by a law, the title of which has been preserved to us (*de collegiis restituendis novisque instituendis*), but not its precise provisions. This permission, however, was again abrogated; and in the days of Augustus it was not permitted to form any new association of a private nature without the express sanction of the

[1] Guther de Jure Manium I.S. apud Græv. Thes., xii. 1100.

Senate, which sanction (the old lawyers tell us) was very rarely given.[1] Whoever dared to break this law was liable to the same punishment as one who had committed sacrilege with violence; that is to say, he might be beheaded, thrown to wild beasts, or burnt alive, according to the discretion of the judge. Spite of the severity of the law, however (or perhaps rather in consequence of it), the offence was frequently committed, and it was necessary to renew the prohibition in every successive reign,[2] the emperors alleging as the motive of their legislation, that every kind of wickedness had been plotted and executed in past times by factions who disguised themselves under the name, and abused the privileges of *collegia*. And we may judge of the strictness with which the prohibition was enforced by calling to mind the ineffectual attempt made by Pliny to obtain leave to enrol a body of firemen, though he proposed to limit their number to 150, and promised to use the utmost prudence in making his selection. Nevertheless, his petition was met by a stern refusal. One exception, however, was uniformly made to this suppression of private *collegia*, viz., in favour of those among the poorer classes—even of slaves, with the consent of their masters[3]—who might wish to form a burial-club by means of small monthly contributions. This exception seems to have been made from the very first; it was probably one of the provisions of the Lex Julia; but if so, its application must have been restricted at that time to Rome; for in the end of the second century we find Septimius Severus extending the same privilege to Italy and all the provinces of the empire.

which were allowed even when other clubs were forbidden.

When we consider the immense importance which the ancient Pagans attached to the due performance of all religious rites that concerned the dead, it is hard to believe that burial-clubs did not exist in Rome whenever the right of association

[1] Ulpian, Digest., xlvii. 21, 22.
[2] Tacitus, Annal., xiv. 17; Pliny, Ep. x. 97.
[3] Marcian, Institut., lib. iii.; Judic. Publ., lib. ii.

for private objects was tolerated. Nevertheless no monuments or other certain proofs of their existence have yet been discovered that are more ancient than the imperial period. The earliest is of the date of Nerva, or near the end of the first century, at a time when the imperial jealousy of private associations was certainly not dormant, but the rights of burial-clubs were respected. Their number increased rapidly in the following century, perhaps in consequence of the suppression of all other *collegia*, which were thus driven either to superadd the purpose of burial to the objects for which they were originally instituted, or even to substitute this purpose for every other, in order that they might be shielded by the protection of the law. At any rate, we learn from the unquestionable testimony of inscriptions on public monuments, that burial-clubs existed in extraordinary numbers, under every variety of names during the period with which we are specially concerned, the second and third centuries of the Christian era, so that the word *collegium*, without any adjunct whatever, came at that time almost to be used as synonymous with a burial-club.[1]

They were very numerous in second and third centuries.

The members of most of these clubs would appear, if we might judge from their titles, to have been united during life in some common religious worship, for they call themselves worshippers (*cultores*) of Jupiter, of Hercules, of Apollo and Diana, of Isis, or of some other deity. Nevertheless, no records have reached us of their joint action in anything beyond the purchase, or the use, of a common place of burial, together with the feasts, sacrifices, and all other observances which belonged to such places. The conclusion, therefore, can hardly be rejected as illogical, that this was really the chief, if not the only, cause of their existence. Several indeed did not even profess to have any religious tie, but merely took the title of some deceased benefactor whose memory they desired to honour—*e.g.*, "the *cultores* of the statues and shields of L. Abullus Dexter," "the club which is in the house of Sergia

O.H., 2414, 4073. *I.R.N.*, 5029.

[1] St. Cyprian, Ep. 67.

Paulina," "the club which is in the ground of Larcus Macedo," A.D. 122, "the place of burial of men living together who are wont to partake of a feast together," &c. The second of these titles will remind our readers of St. Paul's convert, Sergius Paulus, the pro-consul and governor of Cyprus, and again of St. Paul's phraseology in another place, "the church which is in their house;"[1] and they may be tempted to suspect some Christian origin of the inscription. We must not allow ourselves, however, to be misled; the *collegium* in question was really a club consisting of Pagan slaves, A.D. 168. It is not so certain that the ambiguous language of the last title which we enumerated may not have concealed a Christian community.

How formed,

The burial-clubs seem to have been formed in two ways. Some of them were called into existence by the wise generosity of private individuals, who, on the occasion of the death of a husband or wife, devoted a portion of their means to preparing a place of burial, not only for their lost relative, but also for themselves and others, friends and relatives, or dependents of the family, selected within certain limitations. Others again were formed, as they have commonly been among ourselves, by the voluntary aggregation of numerous subscribers. And as their origin was twofold, so also was their organisation, and the way in which they fulfilled the purpose for which they were made. Sometimes they constructed a new burial-place altogether, exclusively for their own members, or they bought a side or some considerable portion of a *columbarium* already existing, as we have already said was done also by some private families. Sometimes they only granted a certain sum of money for all the expenses of the funeral, and left it to the heirs of each deceased member to choose the place and mode of burial for themselves. Sometimes also they seem to have undertaken the expense of a monument as well as of the funeral, but this was probably only in exceptional cases, for in some instances *C.I.L.*, i. 379. 1293. *O.H.*, 6063.

[1] Acts xiii. 7; Romans xvi. 5.

the surviving relatives certainly bore a part of the expense themselves.

and maintained.

But in either case, whether the club was the creation of a single benefactor, or the result of a combination of private individuals, its prosperity did not depend wholly upon the wealth of the original foundation, nor upon the amount of the monthly contributions of the members; it was materially affected by the legacies it received from various benefactors, subject to very easy and even profitable conditions. Once now and then the condition was expressed only in vague terms

O. H., 4070.

—*e.g.*, that roses may be sprinkled more abundantly (and food, we may suppose, more abundantly distributed) at the tomb of the *patronus* of the club, or at that of the benefactor's, or, as in another case, it was only ordered that not less than twelve men should meet and dine once a year at the tomb of the deceased.[1] In most instances, however, the conditions were much more precise, and bound the members very strictly, so that in case of neglect heavy fines were inflicted, or the legacy altogether forfeited.

Three monuments which have been discovered during the present century, and which belong nearly to the same date (A.D. 133–167), contain so many important particulars as to the internal organisation of these clubs that we need make no apology for describing them here. The most ancient was brought to light in 1816, amid the ruins of the ancient baths in Lanuvium, or, as it is now called, Cittá Lavinia, a small town some twenty miles from Rome. It contains the statutes of a club of freedmen and slaves, erected towards the end of the reign of Hadrian, or at least these particular statutes were agreed to in a full meeting of the club in the year 133, and they were engraved on this stone and set up somewhere within their place of meeting by order of the patron, a magistrate of the town, three years afterwards. The *collegium* professes to consist of worshippers of Diana and Antinous; their meetings

O. H., 6086. Statutes of some of these clubs.

A benefit club.

[1] Muratori, vol. i. class vii. p. cxii. 3.

were held in the temple of Antinous, and two of their annual feasts were the birthdays of these two personages—that is, the days of the dedication of their two temples in that town; but when we have said this, we have said all that is to be found in their statutes savouring of Paganism. The rest breathes a spirit of sound sense and genial kindness worthy of all admiration. The document begins by citing the Act of Parliament, so to speak, by virtue of which the club was able to exist. It is the decree of the Senate, already spoken of, which provided that it should be lawful for men of the poorer sort (*tenuioribus*) to club together and form a guild, whereby to secure to themselves a decent burial when they came to die, by means of a small monthly payment during life. They recite also the caution which the Act contained, that their meetings should not be more than monthly, and that it should be *bonâ fide* for the sake of providing the means of burial. After salutations to the emperor and good wishes for the prosperity of their club (for the long continuance of which they say they ought to provide by punctual payment of their subscriptions), all persons desiring to become members are exhorted to read diligently the rules before entrance, lest a subject of complaint, or even perhaps matter for a lawsuit might afterwards arise.

After this preamble there follow the statutes in order. Every new member shall give a keg of good wine, and pay so much money (about fifteen or sixteen shillings) on admission, and so much a month (about fourpence) afterwards. If at the time of his death his subscriptions should be so many months in arrear, the club shall take no account of his funeral; but if otherwise, and he has paid for a certain length of time, it shall pay so much (less than thirty shillings) out of the common chest, a sixth part of which shall be divided among those who attend the funeral; the funeral is to be conducted on foot. If a member dies at a greater distance than twenty miles from the town, three members shall be deputed to go and superintend the funeral, and they shall give an honest account of all their

expenses to the general body of members; and if they be detected in any attempt at fraud, they shall be fined fourfold.[1] . . . A small definite sum shall be allowed for travelling expenses to and fro. If news of the death does not arrive in time, or if the distance is too great, then whoever has buried him shall present his bill of expenses, attested by seven Roman citizens, and his demands shall be satisfied, and a receipt in full must be given. If any member of the club die not having made a will, his funeral shall be conducted according to the discretion of the members and officers of the club. If the body of any deceased member be detained by the harshness of his master or mistress, he shall be buried in effigy (*ei funus imaginarium fiet*). Also, it has been resolved that if any member commits suicide from any cause whatsoever, the club shall take no notice of his funeral.[2] Also, that any member, being a slave, who shall receive his liberty, shall give a keg of good wine. Also, that whosoever shall refuse to serve his year of office as *magister* or warden, and to give the usual entertainment on his appointment, shall pay a fine of five shillings or more to the public chest, and the next in order on the list shall serve in his stead. Then follows the list of days on which suppers are to be given (*ordo cænarum*), which includes the birthdays of the patron of the club, of his parents, of his brother, and of the club itself—*i.e.*, the day of its foundation. The quantity of bread and wine and small fishes (*sardæ*) to be allowed on these occasions to each mess of four is specified. Certain privileges are to be granted to members of a certain standing, and to those who have discharged with credit the duties of the club's officers. These privileges consist of immunities *a sigillis* and double rations; to others, half as much again is allowed; and the object of these rewards is that others

[1] The stone is here imperfect.

[2] Mommsen attributes this proviso to motives of economy, and not to any higher appreciation of the value of human life or hatred of suicide (De Coll. et Sod., p. 100). But compare the inscription quoted above from Orelli, 4404.

may be encouraged to do the same. Finally, it is ordered that all complaints and all matters of business shall be dealt with at the public meetings, that so the peace and harmony of their entertainments may not be interfered with; and if anybody causes a disturbance or picks a quarrel with another member he is to be fined; the fines are to be still heavier if a member says anything insulting to any of the officials during the suppers. The fines range from one shilling to five. And then the document concludes with a brief mention of a few religious ceremonies, such as the offering of incense and libations of wine on solemn days, to be executed by the officials of the society, each in his turn, and oil is to be provided for the public bath before the great feasts on the days of Antinous and Diana.

A club of private foundation.

The next monument we will quote is just twenty years later, and it records certain benefactions of a lady of rank to a burial-club which was founded A.D. 154, and was nominally a college of Æsculapius and Hygeia. The benefaction was made in memory of her deceased husband, who seems during life to have had charge of the imperial picture galleries; and it consisted of a small building on the left-hand side of the Via Appia, between the first and second mile out of the city, a marble statue of Æsculapius, and a covered hall and portico in which the members (*populus*) of the college might feast. She also gave the college a considerable sum of money (something less than £500) on certain conditions, of which the principal were, that the number of members should never exceed sixty, and that only freemen should be elected to fill up the vacancies caused by death. It should be lawful, however, for any member to bequeath his place to his son or brother, or even to one of his freedmen; but in such cases the new member should pay into the common chest one half of the sum which the college usually paid for the expense of the funeral of a deceased member (*funeraticium*), and the interest arising from these funds was never to be spent in any other way than in distributions, according to certain

fixed proportions, among the officers and members of the college on their appointed days of meeting, of which six or seven are enumerated. On some of these money was distributed, as well as bread and wine and *sportulæ;* to the principal officers of the club three *denarii*, to other subordinate officials two, and to each private member one. On the *gaude*-day (so to speak) of the year, the anniversary of the foundation of the club, this distribution was doubled, but the same proportions observed. The distributions also of bread and of wine followed the same law of proportion. Moreover, if any of the members were absent for any other cause but foreign travel or confirmed ill-health, their portions both of bread, wine, and money were divided amongst those who were present.[1] The same monument makes mention of a supper on the 14th of March, which had been provided by the liberality of another and earlier benefactor. Finally, the brother-in-law of the principal benefactress left another sum of money, subject to the same conditions as before; and it was enacted that if the wardens (*curatores*) of the society failed to observe these conditions in any particulars, they should forfeit to the common chest a considerable sum of money.

A bankrupt club.

The third and last monument we will quote tells of a *collegium* which was by no means so fortunate in the acquisition of legacies. It belonged to an obscure town in Dacia, where the wooden tablets (a diptych smeared with wax) were found in a marvellous state of preservation, on occasion of reopening an old Roman mine near Verespatak in 1788. The college had been established nominally in honour of Jupiter Cernenus (a local appellation), but in substance this also was a mere burial-club like the rest. Originally it had numbered fifty-four members, but at the time we come across it (A.D. 167) they had dwindled down to seventeen, and even these did not

C.I.L., iii. 924.

[1] Compare O. H. 4069, 4115, 4511. Sometimes, however, the members were allowed to send a friend to the feast in their stead, in case of unavoidable absence (O. H. 4366), as it seems to have been desired to bring together as large a company as possible to do honour to the deceased.

regularly attend the meetings, nor pay the appointed contributions. The funds, therefore, were no longer sufficient to meet the obligations, and one of the wardens (there ought to have been two, but his co-warden, *commagister suus*, had never put in an appearance, the writer of the tablet says, since the day of his appointment) issues an official document, attested by seven witnesses, which is in fact a declaration of bankruptcy. He gives a statement of accounts, showing what remains from the expenses of funerals already celebrated, reimburses himself for the caution-money he had deposited on taking office, laments that nobody has given them any presents or legacies, and concludes by giving notice that from this time forward when any member dies he must not think that he belongs to any club, or can get any allowance made for his funeral.[1]

The number and constitution of these Roman burial-clubs is a subject to which the attention of scholars has only recently been drawn. It was first broached by Mommsen; but nobody before De Rossi had pointed out their bearing upon the fortunes of the infant Church. A moment's consideration, however, will suffice to show how convenient a cloak they might have been made to provide for the assemblies of the early Christians, if only their social and political condition would enable them to avail themselves of it. This is a point into which we will proceed to inquire in the next chapter. Here we will only add a further particular about the clubs, which will be found useful when we come to use this page of private life among the Pagans in illustration of the history of the Christian Catacombs.

Some burial-clubs made up of members of a single family, and called by that name,

It is clear from the testimony of sepulchral inscriptions, that in practice it was competent for any family to constitute themselves into a private *sodalitium*, *collegium*, or burial-club, and that in this capacity they assumed a new name, either derived from one of their own family names, or, if they preferred it,

[1] The original of this inscription is preserved in the National Museum at Pesth.

altogether distinct—*e.g.*, in a small suburban catacomb on the Via Latina, only discovered in 1877, one of the graves was closed with a Pagan stone, telling us the measurement and other particulars of "the sepulchre of one Annius Phylles and of the college of the Phylletians." Here it is obvious that those who made use of the sepulchre of Annius Phylles and had a share in its ownership were called Phylletians from the cognomen of the founder of the tomb. On the other hand, the very long inscription which was referred to in the beginning of this chapter shows us another *collegium*, the title of which had no connection whatever with the family names of those who founded or belonged to it. These were Aurelius Vittalio and his wife Ælia Sophias, Aurelius Mercurius, his brother, and the others already mentioned. After the enumeration of all of these, the inscription concludes thus :—

or some other chosen by themselves.

JUVEO ITUM AMBITUM
UNIVERSOS ABERE ET HOC PETO
ŒGO SYNCRATIUS A BOBIS UNIBERSIS
SODALIS UT SINE BILE REFRIGERETIS
SYNCRATIORUM.

"I, a Syncratian, order that all [the members] shall have the right of going to and fro [at this sepulchre], and I beg of all of you, my fellow-members, that you refresh yourselves [*i.e.*, partake of the usual feast together at the tomb] without any strife or quarrelling.—OF THE SYNCRATIANS."

"The Syncratians" was evidently the title by which all the joint-owners of this burial-place chose to be called in this peculiar capacity. And there have been found many other Pagan sepulchral inscriptions which terminate in this same way—that is to say, with some name, usually of Greek extraction, and selected apparently for its sound of good omen, such as Eutychii, Eutropii, Eugenii, Eusebii, Gaudentii—in the form of the plural genitive, without any noun on which it has grammatical dependence. Probably *sepulcrum*, or an equivalent, is understood; indeed, in one instance, we find it expressed, *Æterna domus Olympiorum.* In a future chapter we shall see

a stone inscribed with the single word EUTYCHIORUM in a beautiful round vault in the Cemetery of St. Callixtus ; and we shall understand in the same way that this particular chamber was the property, or at least the place of burial, of persons calling themselves by that name for a special purpose and in a special capacity, though ordinarily, as we gather from a number of epitaphs lying near, the family was known in the world by the name of the Florii Florentii.

CHAPTER III.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL POSITION OF THE FIRST ROMAN CHRISTIANS.

Gospel introduced to Rome A.D. 33—*St. Peter's Visit,* A.D. 42—*Numerous converts—Some of them noble—Pomponia Græcina, Flavius Clemens, Domitilla—Christians at first confounded with Jews—Judaism tolerated in Rome—Christianity proscribed by Roman law,* A.D. 64—*First Persecution by Nero—Continual insecurity afterwards.*

Gospel introduced to Rome A.D. 33.

THE first sowing of the seed of the gospel in the metropolis of the ancient Pagan world is involved in some obscurity. It is certain, however, that it must have been almost simultaneous with the birth of Christianity. For we know that among the witnesses of the miracle on the day of Pentecost were "strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes;" and on the return of these strangers to their homes, the wonderful sight they had witnessed would be at once communicated to others, and the solemn tidings they had heard would be circulated from mouth to mouth among the Jews of the capital. These, then, were probably the first preachers of the gospel in the Eternal City. But they had not been "sent;" they were not apostles, and were therefore incapable of founding a Church.

For twelve years after the Ascension, in obedience (as we are told [1]) to an express command of Christ, the Apostles had preached only to the Jews. At the end of this time, the chief Apostle was chosen by Divine Providence to admit the Gentile

[1] By Clemens Alexandrinus, Stromata, vi. 5, p. 636, as quoted by Mr. Allies, "Formation of Christendom," iii. 14, from whom this sketch is taken.

Cornelius into the bosom of the Church, thereby teaching that the restriction was now removed, and that henceforward the whole Gentile world was opened to the preaching of the gospel. The imperial city of Rome, the capital of the known world, the very heart and centre of heathendom, was manifestly the chief field for such a work. The name of Cornelius, "a centurion of the Italian band," pointed Romewards; and circumstances soon occurred which obliged St. Peter to fly from Judea, and so led him to bend his steps in that direction. He had been seized by Herod Agrippa, and was in imminent danger of death, when he was miraculously delivered out of prison; whereupon, the inspired writer says, "he departed and went into another place;" and ancient writers[1] tell us that this "other place" was the city of Rome. It is remarkable that the "Italian band," in consequence of Herod's accession, was ordered back to Rome just at this time, so that there were special facilities for the Apostle to have accompanied his convert Cornelius to the capital. That the kingdom in which Herod ruled would henceforth, so long as Herod was its ruler, be unsafe for him, is plain; and probably the Evangelist was unwilling to disclose the name of the place whither he went, because St. Paul was at this very time a prisoner in Rome, and would presently be called upon to justify his conduct before Nero, so that it was not desirable to record anything about the foundation of a Christian Church in that city. If this account of the matter is correct, it would have been in the second year of the Emperor Claudius, A.D. 42 (as St. Jerome[2] tells us that it was), that St. Peter laid the foundation and organised the construction of the Roman Church; and his work, once begun, prospered so well that five years later the antagonism between those Jews who accepted and those who rejected his preaching led to tumults of sufficient

St. Peter's visit, A.D. 42.

Numerous converts.

[1] We still quote from Mr. Allies, who refers to Euseb. H. E., ii. 14; Orosius, vii. 6; and St. Leo, Serm. 82, 4.

[2] De Script. Eccles., 1.

gravity to induce the Emperor to publish an edict [1] ordering the expulsion of the Jews from the city; and a few years later still, St. Paul writes to the Roman Christians, rendering thanks to God for "their faith being spoken of throughout the whole world." [2] How well these praises were merited was soon made manifest by the test of a bloody persecution. St. Clement, a contemporary and successor of St. Peter, writing to the Corinthian Church,[3] speaks of "a great multitude of the elect becoming in Rome a most honourable example by their admirable endurance of many sufferings and tortures;" and the heathen historian [4] gives the same testimony as to the number of those who suffered for the faith in this first persecution by Nero.

Some noble.

We have no such distinct evidence as to the social position of the converts to Christianity. The general destruction of ecclesiastical writings during the persecution by Diocletian has left us but scanty records of those days from Christian pens; and there was nothing in the temper and practices of the new religion to commend it as a theme to Pagan authors, who, as a rule, were supremely indifferent to the secrets of conscience and the history of souls. We are left, therefore, to glean the information we desire from a number of single facts, scattered about in various places, some written, some monumental, some Christian, some Pagan. Holy Scripture tells us of converts in

[1] This, at least, is a very natural explanation of the statement of his Pagan biographer, that the tumults owed their origin in some way to Christ; *Impulsore Chresto*, Sueton. in Claud. xxv. St. Paul was accused of "raising seditions among all the Jews throughout the world by his preaching" (Acts xxiv. 5). As to *Chresto* being used by Suetonius for *Christo*, Lactantius tells us (Div. Instit., iv. 17) that the Pagans *Eum immutatâ litterâ Chrestum solent dicere.* Tertullian, too (Apolog., 3), *Cum perperam Chrestianos pronunciatur a vobis. nam nec nominis certa est notitia penes vos.* Christians themselves sometimes made the same mistake in inscriptions on their gravestones [FORTUNATA VIVES IN CHRETO, Bullett. 1873, p. 21], but this was owing to the ignorance or unskilfulness of the engraver.

[2] Romans i. 8.

[3] Ep. ad Cor. 1. 6.

[4] Tacitus, Annal., xv. 44.

the households of Aristobulus, Narcissus, and Cæsar himself;[1] but these may have belonged almost to any social rank, from the highest to the lowest. We learn from tradition of the conversion of Cornelius Pudens, a Roman senator. A Pagan historian has preserved to us the memory of a noble Roman lady, Pomponia Græcina, who (we shall presently show reason to believe) was converted to the faith in the year 58. And another records the martyrdom of a Roman consul, and the confessorship of the faith by other members of the imperial family before the end of the first century. Ancient metrical inscriptions have been found[2] celebrating the praises of another noble patrician, named Liberalis, holding the highest office in the state, and laying down his life for the faith, whose memory in all other respects is buried in oblivion.[3] In more recent times, too, other inscriptions have been found recording the burial, by their husbands, of noble Roman ladies of senatorial rank (*clarissimæ*) in the common graves of the galleries in the most ancient parts of the Roman cemeteries. It was only from the pages of Dio Cassius[4] that we knew of the profession of Christianity, or at least of a great interest in it and partiality towards it, by Marcia, concubine of Commodus, towards the end of the second century, until, in our own day, this intelligence has been confirmed and enlarged by the newly discovered "Philosophumena."[5] Eusebius has preserved to us the memory of Apollonius, a Roman senator, who suffered martyrdom during the same reign. Tertullian, writing a little later, tells us that Septimius Severus protected Christian senators and their wives, but says nothing as to their names and number. In another place, however, he says boldly,

R.S., i. 110
Bull., 1866, p. 25.

[1] Rom. xvi. 2; Phil. iv. 22.

[2] Gruter, 1171, 9; 1172, 6.

[3] He was buried in the Catacomb *ad Septem Columbas*, or *in clivo cu cumeris*. R. S., i. 132, 320.

[4] Dio Cass. Hist., lxxii. 4.

[5] Philosoph., ix. 12. The author calls her φιλοθεος, and says that in protecting the Christians she wished to do some good work. Bullett., 1866, p. 6; cf. De Witte in P. Cahier's "Melanges Archæologiques," iii. 165.

before the whole Pagan world, that not only were the cities of the Roman empire full of Christian people, but even the senate and the palace, and that men of all ranks as well as all ages were deserting Paganism for Christianity,[1] and we can hardly doubt that it had been so from the first. The net cast into the sea at the bidding of Christ enclosed a great multitude of fishes of various kinds. The apostolic preaching drew forth from the corrupt mass of heathenism chosen souls from among all conditions of life, men and women, rich and poor, slaves and freeborn, learned and unlearned. What St. Paul said of the Church in Corinth, that "there were not amongst them many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble," might doubtless have been predicated with equal truth of the Church in every part of the world; but we must remember (as Origen answered to Celsus when he urged this as an objection against the Christian faith) that the wealthy and educated classes are always small in proportion to the poor and ignorant;[2] and all that we contend for—viz., that there were at least some wealthy nobles among the early Christians—we have in fact already proved. Nevertheless, since some of the names which have been mentioned have a very intimate connection with the history of the Catacombs, it will be well to refer to them at greater length.

Pomponia Græcina.

And first, of Pomponia Græcina, the wife of Plautius, who conquered Britain under the Emperor Claudius: we read[3] that she was accused of having embraced the rites of "a foreign superstition;" that the matter was referred to the judgment of her husband, in the presence of a number of her relations, who pronounced her innocent; that she lived afterwards to a great age "in continual sadness;" but that no one interfered with her about this any more, and that in the end it turned to her greater glory. It is true that the language of this narrative is obscure; but it had always been the common belief of

[1] Ad Scapul., cc. 2, 4; Apolog., i. 37; Ad Nat., i. 1.
[2] Origen c. Cels., i. 27. [3] Tacitus, Annal., xiii. 32.

commentators that this "foreign superstition" here spoken of was no other than Christianity; and this interpretation has lately received important confirmation by the discovery in a very ancient crypt near the Catacomb of St. Callixtus of the gravestones of a Pomponius Græcinus and other members of the same family, showing that in a very early period of the Church's history some of them were undoubtedly Christian. The crypt has always been known as the crypt of Lucina; and De Rossi has hazarded a conjecture that possibly this Lucina was no other than Pomponia Græcina herself; that Lucina was in fact her Christian name, having reference to the supernatural illumination received through the sacrament of Baptism. Dr. Merivale, indeed, characterises the whole story of this conversion to Christianity as "a surmise of the flimsiest character;" but he is evidently unacquainted with the circumstance we have just mentioned, of the profession of the faith by members of her family at no very distant period.

Another history, having yet closer and more certain connection with one of the Catacombs, is more full and distinct. It concerns the profession of Christianity by certain members of the family of Flavii Augusti, that is, of the family which gave Vespasian to the throne. The elder brother of Vespasian, Titus Flavius Sabinus, had been prefect of the city in the year in which the princes of the Apostles, SS. Peter and Paul, suffered martyrdom; it is certain, therefore, that he must have been brought into contact with them, and heard something of the Christian faith. He is described by the great historian of the empire as a man whose innocence and justice were unimpeachable; a mild man, who had a horror of all unnecessary bloodshed and violence. Towards the close of his life, he was accused by some of great inactivity and want of interest in public affairs;[1] others thought him only a man of moderation, anxious to spare the lives of his fellow-citizens; others

The Flavii. *Bull.*, 1865, 17-24.

[1] "In fine vitæ alii segnem . . . credidere."—*Tacitus*, *Hist.*, iii. 65, 75.

again spoke of his retiring habits as the natural result of the infirmities of old age. Whilst we listen to all these conjectures as to the cause of a certain change which seems to have come over him in his declining years, the question naturally occurs to us, whether it is possible that he can have had some leanings towards the Christian faith, or even been actually converted to it. It is a question which cannot now be answered; but at least it is certain that the charges brought against him correspond with those which were not uncommonly urged against Christianity—viz., that its principles were prejudicial to active industry, and its general tendency unsocial;[1] and the fact that some of the prefect's descendants in the next generation were undoubtedly of this faith, gives a certain degree of plausibility to the conjecture.

Flavius Clemens.

Flavius Sabinus seems to have had four children, of whom the most conspicuous was Titus Flavius Clemens, the consul and martyr. He married the daughter of his cousin, who was sister to the Emperor Domitian, and called by the same name as her mother, Flavia Domitilla. Flavia Domitilla the younger bore her husband, the consul, two sons, who were named respectively Vespasian junior and Domitian junior, having been intended to succeed to the throne; and the famous Quinctilian[2] was appointed by the Emperor himself to be their tutor. At what time their parents became Christians, and what was the history of their conversion, we do not know; but the facts of Clemens' martyrdom and Domitilla's banishment are attested by Dio Cassius.[3] His words are, that "Domitian put to death several persons, and amongst them Flavius Clemens, the consul, although he was his nephew, and although he had Flavia Domitilla for his wife, who also was a relation of the Emperor's. The charge of atheism was brought against them both, on which charge many others also had been condemned, going after the manners and customs of the

[1] "Infructuosi in negotiis dicimur."—*Tertull. Apol.*, sec. 42.
[2] Instit., iv. 1, sec. 2.
[3] Hist., lxvii. 13.

Jews; and some of them were put to death, and others had their goods confiscated; but Domitilla was only banished to Pandatereia" (an island opposite the Gulf of Gaeta, half way between Ponza and Ischia, now known by the name of Sta. Maria). The reader will observe that Christianity is not expressly mentioned in this passage; on the contrary, the crimes laid to the charge of these victims of imperial tyranny are those of atheism and conformity to Jewish manners; but most learned critics have agreed with Gibbon [1] that this singular association of ideas could not with any propriety have been applied to any but Christians. Of them we have abundant testimony, both that they were for some time confounded by the Pagans with the Jews, and also that they were accused of atheism.[2]

Had it been handed down in any Acts of the Martyrs that, immediately after the death of the Apostles, Christianity was within an ace of mounting the imperial throne, that a cousin and niece of the Emperor not only professed the new religion, but also suffered exile, and even death itself, on its account, we can imagine with what vehemence the pious legend would have been laughed to scorn by some modern critics; but the testimony of Dio Cassius, to which we may add perhaps that of Suetonius also,[3] is generally received with greater respect.

Flavia Domitilla.

There was yet a third lady of the same noble family, bearing the same name of Flavia Domitilla, with whom we are more nearly concerned than with either of her ancestors. She was a granddaughter (on the mother's side) of Titus Flavius Sabinus, and consequently a niece of the consul. She, too, suffered banishment, like her aunt, and for the same cause—profession of the Christian faith. Some modern authors, indeed, have insisted on identifying her with the last-mentioned lady; but, as Tillemont justly says, it is unreasonable to accuse

[1] Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, c. xvi.

[2] St. Justin. Apol., i. 6, ii. 3; Athenag. Legat. pro Christ., 3; Minut. Felix. Octavius, 8, 10; and Euseb. Hist. Eccl., iv. 15.

[3] He accuses the consul, "contemptissimæ inertiæ."

of inaccuracy grave ancient authors unless necessity obliges, and in the present instance there is no such necessity. Both the weight of historical testimony and ecclesiastical tradition are in favour of distinguishing the two Christian Domitillas.[1] In speaking of the younger lady, Eusebius has a very striking passage, which testifies clearly to the marvellous spread of the Christian religion even before the expiration of the first century. He has just had occasion to mention the latter part of Domitian's reign, and he says:[2] "The teaching of our faith had by this time shone so far and wide, that even Pagan historians did not refuse to insert in their narratives some account of the persecution and the martyrdoms that were suffered in it. Some, too, have marked the time accurately, mentioning, amongst many others, in the fifteenth year of Domitian (A.D. 96), Flavia Domitilla, the daughter of a sister of Flavius Clemens, one of the Roman consuls of those days, who, for her testimony for Christ, was punished by exile to the island of Pontia." The same writer, in his "Chronicon,"[3] gives the name of one of the authors to whom he refers, and that name is Brutius. It is worth mentioning, because many fragments of inscriptions belonging to the Gens Brutia have been found in the immediate neighbourhood of the Cemetery of Domitilla (the same whose exile he had recorded), as though the burial-place of the two families had been in close proximity; and the epitaph of a child (Brutius Crispinus) found within the cemetery itself would seem to indicate that some members of the historian's family had become Christians at an early period.

[1] Mem. d'Hist. Eccl., tom. ii. p. 126. Scaliger was the first to suggest correction of the texts, either of Dio Cassius or Eusebius, or of both, in order to make them seem to speak of the same person. Notæ in Euseb. Chron., Amstel., 1658, p. 205. Mommsen (Corpus Inscript. Latin, tom. vi. p. 172) has lately attempted to effect the same purpose in another way. Their arguments are fully discussed and answered by De Rossi, Bullettino, 1875, pp. 69–77.

[2] H. E., iii. 18.

[3] St. Hieronym. Interp. Chron. Eus. Pamph., A.D. 98, Opera, tom. viii. p. 605, ed. Migne.

The political position of the first Christians.

These glimpses at the social position of some of the earliest professors of Christianity in Rome, slight and imperfect as they are, are valuable; and when we come to study the first period in the history of the Catacombs, they will be found to furnish some interesting examples of "undesigned coincidences." A still more important subject, however, and one on which it is happily more easy to throw sufficient light, is the political or religious position of Christians in the eye of the law; and of this we will now proceed to speak.

They were regarded as a sect of the Jews.

At first the Imperial Government looked upon them only as a sect of the Jews. Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, drove both Paul and his Jewish accusers from his tribunal, refusing to adjudicate upon "questions of a word and of names, and of your law."[1] Claudius Lysias wrote to Felix, procurator of Judea, saying that Paul had been accused before him "concerning questions of the Jewish law;"[2] and Festus explained to Agrippa that the clamours of the Jews against the Apostle were about "certain questions of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, deceased, whom Paul affirmed to be alive."[3] Indeed, it is not easy to see how the Romans could take any other view of Christianity than as a form of Judaism, since it was notorious that the Christians worshipped the God of Moses and the prophets, and claimed that their religion was the fulfilment of all the promises, types, and figures of Judaism.

Judaism tolerated in Rome.

Now Judaism, both in its national customs and its distinctive religious rites, was expressly recognised and protected by the Roman laws, "even in Rome itself," from the days of Julius Cæsar. Augustus, allowing them to share in the largesses of corn which were made to the people, provided that if the largess happened to be given on the Sabbath-day, the Jews should be allowed to receive it at another time.[4] It is calculated that there were resident in Rome in the days of Tiberius not less than fifteen or twenty thousand Jews,[5] and although in his

[1] Acts xviii. 12–17. [2] Acts xxiii. 29. [3] Acts xxv. 19.
[4] Philo. de Legat. ad Caium. [5] Joseph. Ant., xiv. 10, 8.

reign, and again in the reign of Claudius, they were banished from the city, yet these expulsions were never more than temporary, and never more than partially enforced. The decree of Cæsar remained unrepealed, which permitted "the Jews, who are in all the world under us, to keep their ancient customs without being hindered so to do."[1] Hence we are not surprised to find, a few years afterwards, "very many Jews" assembled at St. Paul's lodgings in Rome, whilst he preached the gospel to them without prohibition.[2] From inscriptions in Jewish catacombs, and from incidental expressions in Suetonius, it is evident that this protection extended to both classes of proselytes, both the proselytes of justice, who conformed in all respects to the rites of the Mosaic law, and the proselytes of the gate, who only renounced idolatry and abstained from blood and strangled meats. This latter class of proselytes were often called "men fearing God," and the same title was sometimes given to Christians. Under cover of this confusion the Christians would enjoy the protection of the law, even in their assemblies. They were considered *akin* to the Jewish religion, as Tertullian says,[3] "and lived under the shadow of that most famous religion, about whose lawfulness there was no question."

Christian religion proscribed by the Roman law, A.D. 64.

The Jews, however, vigorously denounced their supposed co-religionists, and became in Rome, as elsewhere, the first cause of the persecution of the Church.[4] Thenceforward it was necessary that the Roman Government should either legally recognise the Christian religion *as well as* the Jewish, or else proscribe it. The burning of Rome by Nero, and his false accusations and unjust punishment of the Christians, decided between these alternatives. "This," says Sulpicius

First persecution.

[1] Joseph. Ant., xix. 5, 3. [2] Acts xxviii. 17–31.

[3] "Nos quoque ut Judaicæ religionis propinquos, sub umbraculo insignissimæ religionis certé licitæ."—*Tertull. Apolog.*, cc. 16, 21. Ad Nationes, i. 11.

[4] St. Justin, Dialog. cum Tryph., 17, 108, 110; Tertullian adv. Marcion, iii. 23, ad Nat., i. 14; Origen c. Celsum, vi. 27; Euseb. H. E., iv. 18.

Severus, speaking probably with exact historical accuracy, "was the beginning of cruelties against Christians; afterwards, the religion was forbidden even by express laws, and decrees were published declaring it to be illegal to be a Christian."[1] It does not appear, however, that there was any further open persecution of Christians for a period of thirty years after Nero. Domitian partially renewed it, banishing and putting to death (as we have seen) even members of his own family. The same emperor also persecuted the Jews and their proselytes for matters connected with the fiscal regulations.[2] Both Jews and Christians were protected by his successor, Nerva,[3] so that Lactantius, or whoever else may have been the author of the work "De Mortibus Persecutorum,"[4] even goes so far as to say that the Church was then restored to her former condition of liberty. This, however, must not be interpreted too strictly, for the statutes which created the distinction between the impiety or "atheism" of the Christians and the "religion" of the Jews and proselytes were not repealed, and their operation, though for a while suspended, could be revived at any time, as in fact it was on the death of Nerva. Trajan's reply to the famous letter of Pliny,[5] leaves no doubt whatever as to the state of the law, for while he counsels Pliny not to originate active measures against the Christians, nor to seek for them, yet he tells him that if they were denounced, and brought before the tribunal, the laws required that they should be punished, unless they consented to renounce their faith. *Non licet esse vos!*[6] was the cruel but plain letter of the Roman law against the very existence of the Christians, and their only means of escape were to be found in the hindrances put in the way of accusers by benevolent and tolerant princes.

Domitian.

Nerva.

Pliny's letter to Trajan, A.D. 104.

Even this did not always prove a sufficient protection, for

[1] Sulp. Sev. Hist., ii. 41. [2] Sueton. in Domit., xii.
[3] Tertull. Apolog., 5. [4] C. 3. [5] Ep. x. 97.
[6] Tertull. Apolog., vi. 4.

the malevolence of individuals might insist on pressing the execution of the law. "It might be unlawful to accuse Christians, yet if they were brought before justice it was forbidden to absolve them." Thus, when the Senator Apollonius, already spoken of, was accused of Christianity, the informer was condemned to be broken on the wheel; but Apollonius was required to defend himself before the Senate, and suffered martyrdom by decapitation, "as there was a law of long standing with them, that those who had been once led to trial, and would by no means change their purpose, should not be dismissed."[1] This sounds very much the same plea as that by which Pliny justified his condemnation of those against whom no crime could be proved beyond the fact of their profession of the Christian faith. He says that he ordered those who persisted in the confession of this faith to be led forth to execution, because he did not doubt that whatever the thing might be which they professed, yet certainly their pertinacity and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished. Tertullian tells us[2] of another very ancient law in the Roman empire, which forbade the worship of any god that had not been approved of by the Senate; and we know that in Athens the penalty for violating a similar law was death. We should have gathered from the language of Livy[3] that the prohibition extended only to the celebration of any public worship. But the words of the law, preserved to us by Cicero,[4] are quite plain, and forbid even all private worship of strange gods. This strictness of interpretation, however, would rarely have been insisted upon in practice; for although the Romans refused to recognise any but the religion of the state, and looked upon all others as useless and troublesome superstitions, yet they were scrupulous about interfering with anything that might perchance have a Divine sanction, and on this plea were persuaded to tolerate

[1] Euseb. H. E., v. 21. [2] Apolog., c. 5. [3] Hist., ii. 8, 10.

[4] "Separatim nemo habessit Deos; neve novos sed ne advenas, nisi publicé adscitos, privatim colunto."—*De Legibus*, ii. 8, 10.

within certain limits even the impure mysteries of the worship of Bacchus.[1]

Thus, in one way or another, from the time of Nero to that of Constantine, the sword of persecution remained always suspended over the Church. Sometimes it descended, and the disciples, always insecure, were made to suffer. They could always be punished for practising an illicit religion, if anybody chose to press the charge against them. "No special edict was required to drag them before the altar of Jupiter, and invite them to sprinkle it with incense, and conceive a vow to the genius of the emperor;"[2] and if they refused to do this, they were always liable to capital punishment as traitors and rebels.

[1] Livy, xxxix. 16.

[2] Merivale, History of the Romans under the Empire, vi. 451.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN CATACOMBS.

Attitude of Christianity towards Paganism — Burial a religious act— Christian burial therefore different from Pagan—Dr. Merivale's contrary statement examined—Resemblance between Christian burial-places and those of the Jews; also, of some Pagans—Points of difference—No difficulty in the beginning of public Christian cemeteries—Proofs of their existence in many places—Ancient Christians recognised as a corporate body under cover of the law protecting burial-clubs.

Attitude of Christianity towards Paganism.

WHILST the Roman Government refused to protect or even tolerate Christianity, the attitude of the new religion towards the Government was of a very different kind. It taught obedience to superiors and charity to all. The duty of subjection to the higher powers was inculcated as only a particular form or act of obedience to God Himself; and no less emphatically the duty of brotherly love. Christians were required, as far as in them lay, to live peaceably with all men. Those of the household of faith had a special, but not an exclusive, claim upon their active benevolence. They had been "called out of darkness into marvellous light; they were a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people;"[1] yet they were not on this account required, as Abram was, to "go forth out of their country and from their kindred, and out of their fathers' house, and enter into a strange land." They were not even commanded to separate themselves from all social intercourse, nor to interrupt relations of the most intimate kind which had been already contracted with idolaters in the midst of whom they lived: "otherwise

[1] 1 Peter ii. 9.

they must needs have gone out of this world." [1] "If a brother had a wife that believed not, and she consented to dwell with him, he was not to put her away; or if a woman had a husband that believed not, and he consented to dwell with her, she was not to put away her husband." [2] In a word, as the anonymous author of the Epistle to Diognetus truly says,[3] "Christians were not distinguished from other men, either by country or language, or the customs which they observed. . . . Inhabiting Greek cities as well as barbarian, according as the lot of each has determined, they follow the customs of the inhabitants in respect of clothing, food, and the other details of daily life."

Burial a religious act.

We need not be surprised, then, if we find a close resemblance, in some particulars at least, between Pagan and Christian customs of burial in Rome. But since burial has always been accounted among civilised nations more or less a religious act, and been accompanied with religious ceremonies, we must be prepared to find also certain differences between them. And this has not been sufficiently borne in mind by a modern historian of eminence [4] when he says that the early Christians "burnt their dead after the Roman fashion, gathered their ashes into the sepulchres of their patrons, and inscribed over them the customary dedication to the *Divine Spirits*." This is contrary to all that we should have expected, and (which is more to the purpose) to all that other authors have been able to gather from a careful study of antiquity. Indeed, for the first part of Dr. Merivale's statement we cannot find a vestige of authority in any ancient writer whatever: the only direct testimony we know of which bears upon it says distinctly the opposite. "Christians execrate the funeral pile and condemn burial by fire," says Minucius Felix; and again, "We follow the ancient and better plan of burying in the ground." And since it is certain that the Jews both in Rome and elsewhere,

Christian burial different from Pagan.

Dr. Merivale's contrary statement examined.

[1] 1 Cor. v. 10. [2] 1 Cor. vii. 12.

[3] Chap. v. in vol. i. of Ante-Nicene Library, p. 307.

[4] Merivale, History of the Romans under the Empire, vi. 444.

and even some of the most noble Pagan families in Rome, always retained the more ancient plan, and the law left entire liberty in the matter, there is no reason to suppose that the Christians ever used any other mode of disposing of their dead than that which alone, according to the testimony of this author, they tolerated in the third century.

Christians and Pagans not buried together.

The second part of Dr. Merivale's statement, that "the Christians gathered the ashes of their dead into the sepulchres of their patrons," is no less contrary to everything we know of the feelings and habits both of Pagans and Christians. We have seen, indeed, one generous Pagan providing a last resting-place *misericordiæ*, for the general benefit of all who chose to avail themselves of it. We know of another who made a tomb "for himself, several of his relatives, and as many of his dear friends as chose to come, each in his own time, and rest there." But these are exceptions to the general rule. Most commonly, the right of sepulture in any particular tomb was rigorously confined within certain limits—the wife and children, brothers and sisters, a few chosen friends and favourite freedmen; or, if the limits were extended so as to grant general admission to all the freed men and women of the family and to their posterity, still they did not go further. The idea of a general burial-place for all the inhabitants of a town or district was unknown; and the indiscriminate sepulture of friends and foes, relatives and strangers, in one monument, so that their ashes should be mingled together, is what was specially abhorred: it was forbidden by the law,[1] and heavy fines were imposed and heavier curses invoked upon all who should attempt such an act of profanation. The Jews, too, in like manner had their own family monuments, and refused burial among strangers. When the children of Heth invited Abram to bury his dead in their principal sepulchres, and assured him that no man should be allowed to hinder him from making use

C.I.L., v. 182.

[1] "Iam tanta est religio sepulcrorum ut extra sacra et gentem inferri fas negent esse."—*Cic. de Legibus*, ii. 22.

of any sepulchre he might choose, he declined the proffered gift, and insisted on purchasing a double cave which should be his own property, and in which he and his wife should be buried.[1] When Jacob was at the point of death, he called his son Joseph and made him swear that he would not bury him in Egypt, but take him away out of this land and bury him in the burying-place of his ancestors.[2] And then Joseph, in his turn, makes his brethren swear to him, saying, "God will visit you; carry my bones with you out of this place."[3] And it is in the highest degree improbable that the Christians, in whose creed the doctrine of the resurrection of the body held so prominent a place, should have been less careful in this matter than their Jewish or Pagan neighbours.

We know that in the third century it was accounted an enormity that a Christian Bishop should have allowed his children "to be buried among profane sepulchres, and in the midst of strangers;"[4] nor is there any evidence to show that it would have been looked upon with greater favour at any earlier period of the Church's history, though doubtless it was an inconvenience which sometimes happened in cases where there was no power of choice.

Dr. Lightfoot's examples not conclusive.

In support of the contrary opinion, Dr. Merivale[5] refers to Dr. Lightfoot's account of the inscriptions in certain *Columbaria* recently discovered at Rome, and says that "they contain many of the same names as occur in the salutations of St. Paul to his fellow-countrymen in Rome," whence he seems to conclude that they must needs have been meant for the same persons. But in this he goes far beyond his authority and beyond any conclusion which can be legitimately drawn from his premises. Dr. Lightfoot was anxious to show the possibility of some connection between "the members of Cæsar's household," mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians, and those Roman Christians to whom the same

[1] Gen. xxiii. [2] Gen. xlvii. 30. [3] Gen. l. 24.
[4] St. Cyprian, Ep. 67. [5] History, &c., p. 430.

Apostle sent special salutations at the end of his Epistle to the Church in that city. For this purpose he compared the names of the Christians thus saluted with the names inscribed on the *ollæ* of three *Columbaria*, belonging to the early imperial period, which were discovered near the tomb of the Scipios on the Appian Way in the years 1840–53, and in seven or eight instances he finds an identity of name. Of these, however, Julia, Hermas, Rufus, Amplias (or Ampliatus), are so extremely common that their occurrence is absolutely worthless as an argument in favour of the identity of the persons. Even the name of Philologus, in search of which Dr. Lightfoot was driven to another *Columbarium*, is not uncommon. We found it occurring four times in the first volume we happened to consult of the "Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum." Urbanus or Urbana, and Apelles or Apella, occur still more frequently. On the whole, Dr. Lightfoot concluded that "of all the names that have been considered, the identity in the case of Tryphœna is the most probable, or, not to be guilty of an over-statement, the least improbable."[1] It happens, however, that this name does not belong to any person whose ashes were deposited in the *Columbarium*, but was the name of one who inscribed the title on an urn containing the ashes of some fellow-servant there; so that even supposing that this Valeria Tryphœna were the same as was saluted by St. Paul, it is quite possible that she may have set up this particular inscription before her conversion. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Dr. Lightfoot in a much later publication[2] sums up the whole argument as follows:—"The inscriptions cannot generally be taken to show more than the fact that the same *names* occur. A very faint probability of the identity of *persons* may in some instances be added, though even with the rarer names the identification must be held highly precarious."

[1] Commentary on the Philippians, p. 175, 1868.

[2] He had first treated the subject in the "Journal of Classical and Sacred Philology," vol. iv. p. 78, 1857.

He considered, however—and Dr. Merivale adopts the same opinion—that one at least of those whose ashes lay in the *Columbaria* was certainly a Christian; "her name bespeaks a Christian baptism." The inscription runs thus:—"*Sentiæ Renatæ, q.v. ann. iiii. m. xi. d. viii. Sentius Felicissimus et Amabilis Filiæ Dulcissimæ.*" And certainly, if this inscription had been found in a Christian cemetery, we should not have doubted that the name had reference to the Christian Sacrament. It is possible that it may be so even here, for the Christian child may have been buried in a heathen *Columbarium* under some exceptional circumstances, which we do not know; just as it sometimes happens in our own day, that the place of burial for a man is chosen more in accordance with the wishes of the survivors than of the deceased. On the other hand, we must remember that this same term of a new birth was applied by the Pagans to those who had participated in the mystic rites of the *Mater Deorum* and of Mithras, and who had been purified by the bloody sacrifice of the *Taurobolium*. "The devil," says Tertullian,[1] "imitated even the Divine sacraments in his idolatrous mysteries; he too had his baptism, as well as God, and he promised the same forgiveness of sins from his bath as is given in the Church by the laver of regeneration." Hence it is that *renatus in æternum*, and one or two other words of Christian terminology, are to be found in a few inscriptions or authors undeniably Pagan;[2] they are found, however, applied to adults only, and not to infants.

The third assertion of Dr. Merivale, as to "the frequent occurrence of the letters D.M. on the tombs of the early Christians," must only have been made in ignorance of the real facts of the case, since such occurrence is really of the utmost

[1] De Præscript. xl. See Le Blant, Inscript. Chret. de Gaule, tom. ii. p. 72, and Note C. in Appendix..

[2] Select. Inscript. Orelli, 2352, 6040; Inscr. Regn. Neap. Mommsen, 1669; Gruter, p. 28, n. 2. Gaston Boissier (Religion Romaine, vol. i. p. 415) points out that the phrase *renatus* occurs also in Apuleius, Metamorph., xi. p. 21. See also De Rossi's Inscript. Christian., tom. i. p. 270.

rarity, about once in four hundred.[1] We need not, then, allow ourselves to be detained any longer by an examination of Dr. Merivale's startling statement, which indeed would hardly have deserved refutation had it been made by a writer of less learning and authority; and we may now resume our own account of the relations which existed between the early Christians and the Pagan modes of burial.

Resemblance between the Catacombs and some Pagan places of burial

We have seen that a wealthy Roman citizen provided for his own burial, and that of as many of his friends and relatives as he pleased, by means of a monument built in his field or garden, and very commonly in immediate proximity to the highway. Every visitor to Rome is familiar with the ruins of these monuments on either side of the principal roads, especially the Via Appia; these, however, have been so mutilated and plundered that they give us but a faint idea of what they once were. The sepulchre of the Scipios has suffered less from violence of this kind, as it was not a handsome erection above ground, but an irregularly-shaped subterranean chamber, looking almost as though it were the corner of a deserted quarry; and although the sarcophagi in which the deceased heroes were laid to rest have been transferred elsewhere, we can still see the recesses of the rock which they once filled. This, however, has no real resemblance to the mode of burial adopted in the Catacombs. A nearer approach to that method may be seen in Sante Bartoli's description of the sepulchre of the Nasones[2] that was found in his day on the Via Flaminia; and Fabretti[3] tells us of another similar sepulchre which he visited on the same road. Since that time, many other Pagan sepulchres of the same kind have been discovered on different roads leading out of the city; a rectangular chamber, or chambers hewn out of the

R.S., i. 88.

[1] See "Epitaphs of the Catacombs," pp. 22–24, where this question is fully treated; and see Note C. in Appendix.

[2] Apud Græv. Thes. Antiq. Rom., tom. xii.

[3] Inscr. Domest., p. 55.

tufa, with horizontal shelves or arched recesses in the walls, or sarcophagi standing on the floor, in which the dead bodies were laid. De Rossi therefore expresses his conviction that this form of burial was much more frequent among the old Romans than is generally supposed.

It was also practised by the Jews, wherever they were congregated in any considerable numbers and the nature of the soil permitted it. It had the double advantage of being probably as convenient and economical a mode of providing for the burial of their dead as they could find, and of bearing the closest resemblance to what they had been used to in their own country. Bosio has left us a description of a subterranean Jewish cemetery which he saw on Monte Verde, outside the Porta Portese—that is, close to the quarter of the city which was occupied by those Jews who had been brought away captives by Pompey; and in all essential respects it was like a Christian catacomb, only it was smaller in extent, meaner in execution, and ornamented (of course) with signs and symbols of the Old Law, not of the New. Two or three other Jewish cemeteries, which have been discovered in our own day on the opposite side of the city near the Via Appia, exhibit the same leading characteristics. and Jewish.

At the same time we must not overlook some important points of difference between subterranean sepulchres of Jews and Pagans and the Christian Catacombs. In the Pagan *cellæ* the dead bodies were not always shut up and concealed from view; generally they lay exposed upon a couch or shelf, because there was no occasion to visit the chamber when once the body had been deposited there, whereas, in the Catacombs, each niche, as soon as it had received its own corpse or corpses, was at once hermetically closed, in order that it might be possible to frequent the cemeteries for prayer and religious worship. Moreover, both the mortuary chambers of the Jews in Palestine and of the Pagans everywhere are small isolated chambers, each belonging to a separate family, whereas, in the Points of difference.

Roman Catacombs, burial was provided for all members of the Christian community indiscriminately; not indeed that there was anything to prohibit a Christian family from having its own separate burial-place, if they desired it, but the spiritual bond whereby they were made members of Christ and of one another was out of harmony with such a system of isolation, so that even when private family vaults were made, they were still, usually at least, within the precincts of the general cemetery. Thus in the Cemetery of Callixtus we have an instance, before the end of the third century, or in the very beginning of the fourth, of a private burial-place provided by Severus, the deacon of Pope Marcellinus, who allowed him to make a double *cubiculum* or vault, together with its *arcosolia* and *luminare*, "as a quiet resting-place for himself and his relatives" (SIBI SUISQUE).[1] These same words may be seen again within the same cemetery over a doorway which gives admission to a double crypt, of grand dimensions and richly adorned with various marbles, BITHUS SIBI ET SUIS. And it has been already mentioned that within the limits of the same cemetery a chamber was appropriated to the family of the Florii Florentii, under the conventional name of the Eutychii. These monuments abundantly suffice to show that the early Christians so far retained the customs of their Pagan forefathers as sometimes to continue the practice of having private family sepulchres; the universal brotherhood of the whole body of the Church did not altogether absorb or supersede the ties of blood relationship. Nevertheless, in spite of more or less numerous exceptions on either side, yet speaking generally, we may venture to say that a moderately extensive subterranean cemetery will be found to be Christian, small and separate cells to be Pagan.

Bull., 1865, p. 47.

Of course, in each individual example other characteristics are not absent, whereby it is easy to distinguish the works of the different religions. At present we are only laying down

[1] See Plate ix. 3.

the broad general marks of distinction; and we must add that they were always kept carefully asunder. There was never any communication between them as long as they were in use. Now, indeed, there may be seen several instances of connection between a Christian cemetery and some Pagan monument in its neighbourhood; but this has been the result of modern excavation, not part of the original design. After more than thirty years of careful observation, De Rossi is able to say that he has never found but two apparent exceptions. Even one of these is doubtful, the other is the connection of the well-known chambers of the Mithraic monuments with the Catacomb of Prætextatus, where it is easy to see with what care the Christian fossors sought to remedy the unwelcome accident as soon as it had happened.

Beginning of the Catacombs easy.

On the whole, then, it seems clear that there was nothing in the first beginning of the Christian Catacombs in Rome to excite our wonder or to call for special explanation. We have only to suppose that a few devout and wealthy converts did exactly what some of their Pagan neighbours were doing—viz., set aside a plot of ground for their own burial and the burial of as many others as they might choose to admit, and the work was begun. That it would hereafter serve the Church for higher and more sacred purposes, and that it would finally attain such gigantic proportions as almost to deserve a place among the wonders of the world,[1] is what its originators could not foresee; and though the measure of its subsequent growth adds indefinitely to the interest which attaches to its first beginning, it in no way increases the difficulty of accounting for it. We repeat, therefore, as a conclusion which cannot be gainsaid, that so long as the Christian community in Rome was small enough to escape observation, or could be so subdivided that its several congregations should

[1] See Bullettino, 1867, p. 1, for a curious inscription in Egypt which seems to have reference to them, and to speak of them as one of the Θαύματα of Rome.

appear not to exceed the limits of the *familia* of a noble house, or the *schola* of an ordinary *collegium*, the question of providing for their burial in such places as the Catacombs could have caused no embarrassment to the rulers of the Church.

But it will be asked whether this account of the origin of the Catacombs can be confirmed by any evidence, either written or monumental. Does it rest solely on its own intrinsic probability? or is it possible to find traces of it either in the Catacombs themselves or in the language of any contemporary writers? And we must answer that something at least is forthcoming of both these classes of evidence.

Public Christian cemeteries in several parts of the world.

First of all, it is certain from the testimony of many witnesses who lived in the ages of persecution that there were at that time cemeteries common to the whole Christian family, possessed and used by them not only as places of burial, but also of prayer and religious meetings. Tertullian testifies to this for Africa; the anonymous author of the "Philosophumena," the contemporary biographer of St. Fabian, and St. Cyprian for Rome; Dionysius of Alexandria for that city; Eusebius, for the East generally, and the Council of Elvira for Spain.[1] The very emperors themselves, in their edicts, sometimes forbid and sometimes restore to Christians the right of access to those places "which are called cemeteries," and in one of these decrees it is distinctly stated that there were "churches also and other places which belonged not to private individual Christians but to the whole body of the Church."[2] And when we consider how universal this fact seems to have been throughout the whole Church, and how intimately it was united with the laws, the rites, and ceremonies, one might almost say, with the very existence of the Church, it is impossible to doubt that this was no new thing, but had come down

[1] See these all quoted by De Rossi, R. S., i. 85.

[2] "Christiani non ea loca tantum ad quæ convenire solebant, sed etiam alia habuisse noscuntur *ad jus corporis eorum, id est ecclesiarum, non hominum singulorum pertinentia.*"—*Lactant., de Mort. Persec.*, n. 48; Euseb., H. E., x. 5.

from a yet earlier age. Indeed, the story that is told of the Emperor Alexander Severus proves this. We are told that he resettled in favour of the Christians a dispute which had arisen between them and the *popinarii*, or cooks, as to the right of property in a piece of waste ground on which soldiers had been wont to assemble to eat, drink, and riot, but which more recently had been occupied by a Christian church. This question could hardly have been settled as it was, or indeed could never have been brought before the imperial tribunal at all, had not both the claimants enjoyed equal rights as bodies corporate, for the dispute was not between individuals, but societies. Before the end of the third century we have a still more remarkable case of an appeal to the Emperor Aurelian (A.D. 270) from the Christians of Antioch, that he should turn out of possession of the ecclesiastical buildings Paul of Samosata, who had been deposed from that see and excommunicated as a heretic. Eusebius says that "he decided the business most equitably, ordering the buildings to be given up to those whom the Christian bishops of Italy and of Rome should name. And thus this man was driven out of the Church with extreme disgrace by the temporal power itself."[1] And certainly one cannot help sharing in the manifest surprise of the historian, not only that the sentence of an ecclesiastical synod should have been carried into execution in those days by a Pagan emperor, but also that he should have based his decision upon Church principles (if we may be allowed to introduce so modern a phrase into so old a story), that he should have had a knowledge of, and shown deference to, the internal organisation of the Church.

Christians recognised as a corporate body

However, no amount of knowledge of ecclesiastical discipline, nor even of personal goodwill on the part of the judges, could have availed the Christians against the letter of the law; and it is not easy to see how they could have had any legal *status* at all except as a *collegium funeraticium*, or burial-club.

Under cover of the law protecting burial-clubs.

[1] Hist. Eccl., vii. 30.

Tertullian, in one of his Montanist pamphlets, expresses himself most indignantly upon the subject of Christian congregations coming to any understanding with a Pagan government, and so purchasing for themselves immunity from persecution. "It is not decent," he says, "that Christ should be sold for money. How then should there be any martyrdoms to the honour and glory of God, if liberty is procured for the sect by means of paying a tax?" And he goes on to remind those churches which had paid this tax that they ought to be ashamed of the disreputable companions (*tabernarios et lanios et fures balnearum et aleones et lenones*)[1] with whom they thereby found themselves enrolled on the registers of the police. The natural impetuosity of the writer and the exaggerated strictness of his sect make it difficult to judge what he is here protesting against—whether it may not have been some measure that had been taken advisedly and with the full sanction of the ecclesiastical authorities. It should be remembered that the emperor at that time sitting on the throne was the same who encouraged the establishment of burial-clubs, and extended to all the provinces the law which already tolerated them in Rome; and it is quite possible that, in this or in some other way, a *modus vivendi* was established by which the meetings of the Christians were to a certain degree connived at, their civil *status* being legalised, and their religious character as far as possible ignored.

Christians must have been always very well aware that they were violating an elementary principle of Roman law, as it stood in imperial times, by the mere fact of their being a society bound together by rules of its own, and holding frequent meetings, yet not recognised by the Senate. This is the first charge which Celsus brings against them, that "they hold meetings amongst themselves, contrary to the law;" and Tertullian acknowledges it, even when writing in their defence.[2] He says, "We form an assembly and a congregation, closely

[1] De Fugâ in Persec., cc. xii. xiii. [2] Apol., c. 39.

knit together by the profession of one faith, by the observance of one discipline, and in the bond of a common hope;" and again,[1] "Doubtless we commit offence against divers senatorial decrees and imperial edicts which forbid meetings" (*coitiones*). But he sought to extenuate the fault by claiming to come precisely under the one exception which was allowed; at least, he uses language which could not fail to remind those whom he was addressing of this exception. The law had said, "It is allowed to men of the poorer class to make a monthly contribution and to hold monthly meetings with a view to providing for the expenses of their funerals;" and the Christian apologist writes, "Each of us makes a small monthly contribution, or when he pleases—that is, if he pleases and if he can, for with us there is no compulsion, everything is voluntary; and the money thus collected is spent, not on feasting and drinking, but on feeding and burying the poor." It is clear, too, from the oft-quoted letter of Pliny, that Christians felt their legal position to be directly affected by each fresh edict that was published on the subject of private clubs and associations; for he says that some of those accused of Christianity, whom he had examined, whilst confessing that they had formerly been in the habit of coming together both for religious exercises and to partake of a common meal, yet declared that they had abandoned this practice ever since he had promulgated the imperial edict forbidding *Hetæriæ*.

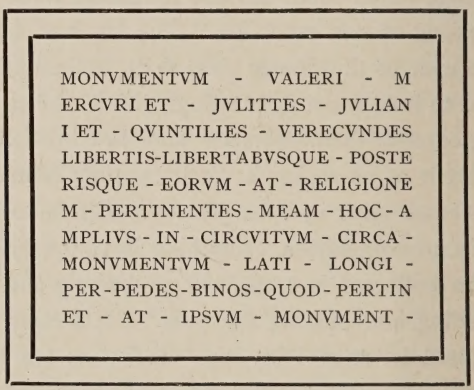
Some proofs of this from monuments

Of course we cannot pretend to say at how early a period any number of Christians resident in Rome or elsewhere formally enrolled themselves as members of a *collegium*, and obtained recognition from the Government in this capacity. We only contend that, under cover of this protection, the Church could have possessed common cemeteries for her children, and did so possess them long before the ages of persecution had ceased. As to private cemeteries belonging, or professing to belong, to particular individuals or families,

[1] Adv. Psychic., c. 13.

these did not stand in need of any exceptional privilege—they were sufficiently protected by the common law of the land; and the following monument, found not long since at the entrance of the Catacomb of St. Nicomedes, in the garden of the Villa Patrizi, outside the Porta Pia, seems to have belonged to such a cemetery :—

in Catacombs of St. Nicomedes,



"The monument of Valerius Mercurius and Julitta, of Julianus and Quintilia Verecunda, and for their freedmen and freedwomen, and their posterity, those belonging to my religion. It [the area] extends beyond the monument itself two feet all round both in length and breadth; all of which is to be taken as belonging to the monument."

At first sight one might almost doubt, perhaps, whether this inscription was Christian or Pagan; but, besides the place in which it was found, we are moved to claim it as Christian by those words, *ad religionem meam pertinentes.* Anything like this is quite unknown on Pagan epitaphs. The word *religiosus* is used occasionally on monuments to denote a worshipper of the *Magna Dea*, or *Mater Deorum;* it is also used by some authors reproachfully, in the sense of superstition,[1] but never, so far as we know, by persons speaking of themselves, and it is doubtful whether it would have conveyed any definite meaning

[1] See Apuleius, Metam., xi. 16, 25. The inscriptions may be seen in Orelli, 2338, 2339. Mommsen, Inscr. R. Neap., 2556.

to any but a Christian or a Jew. It was clearly used here for the purpose of defining within what limits the sepulchre might be used by the relatives and dependants of those who had made it; and it was probably exposed quite publicly over the entrance. The following epitaph, written to effect the same purpose, was set up within the catacomb itself, and therefore speaks out more plainly. It may still be seen where it was found, in a most ancient part of the Catacomb of SS. Nereus and Achilleus, at no great distance from the sepulchre of those of Domitilla, Saints.

M - ANTONI
VS - RESTVTV
S - FECIT - YPO
GEV - SIBI - ET -
SVIS - FIDENTI
BVS - IN - DOMINO.

"M. Antonius Restitutus[1] made this subterranean [sepulchre] for himself and those of his family who believe in the Lord."

The following inscription is still more important, as seeming and in Africa. to record the foundation of a general or public Christian cemetery :—

AREAM AT [AD] SEPVLCHRA CVLTOR VERBI CONTVLIT
ET CELLAM STRVXIT SVIS CVNCTIS SVMPTIBVS
ECLESIÆ SANCTÆ HANC RELIQVIT MEMORIAM
SALVETE FRATRES PVRO CORDE ET SIMPLICI
EVELPIVS VOS SATOS SANCTO SPIRITV
ECLESIA FRATRVM HVNC RESTITVIT TITVLVM. M.A. I. SEVERIANI. C. V.
EX ING . ASTERI.[2]

"Euelpius, a worshipper of the Word, has given this *area* for sepulchres, and has built a *cella* entirely at his own cost. He left this *memoria* to the Holy Church. Hail, brethren! Euelpius with a pure and simple heart salutes you, born of the Holy Spirit."[3]

[1] Restutus and Restuta are frequently written in the Catacombs for Restitutus and Restituta.

[2] *Ex ingenio Asteri* denotes that Asterius was the poet who composed this epitaph. Cf. Tertull. Apol., c. 39.

[3] Cf. Inscr. Christian, l. pp. cx., cxv., cxvi.

It is true that this inscription does not belong to the Roman Catacombs; it has been dug up out of the ruins of Cæsarea, an old Roman town not far from Algiers. Neither is it the original inscription, but only a copy; it is expressly added at the foot of the tablet that "the Church of the Brethren" restored this *titulus*, which must therefore have been destroyed at some previous time, and we know that popular violence had been directed against Christian cemeteries in Africa as early as the year 203.[1] It was set up then within the jurisdiction of Roman law; and what could be done in Africa might be done also in Rome. And when we consider the peculiar expressions that are made use of, it seems impossible to doubt that it was designedly framed upon the model of what was in ordinary use with reference to Pagan sepulchres at the same period, the only difference being that the founder of this monument was not *Cultor Jovis* or *Herculis*, but *Cultor Verbi*, a worshipper of the Word Incarnate; and those for whom it was provided are not called a *collegium*, nor a *sodalitium*, but were the *Ecclesia Sancta* and the *Ecclesia Fratrum*. De Rossi thinks it not at all improbable that this reveals to us the title by which the Christians desired to be known. The members of a Pagan *collegium* were *sodales;* members of the Christian Church were *fratres*. One of the earliest and most careful students of Roma Sotterranea (De Winghe) found in the cemetery at St. Sebastian's a fragment of an inscription which contained both these words, SODALIS FRATRES. Many other monuments, however, have since come to light in various parts of the world, in all of which Christians are called only by the latter title.[2]

Christians probably known as Fratres or Ecclesia Fratrum.

Such, then, is the account which De Rossi would give of the origin of the Roman Catacombs; and if no evidence has been adduced whereby its truth can be demonstrated, yet, at

Conclusion.

[1] Tertullian adv. Scapulam, c. 5.

[2] For the particulars of these inscriptions see "Epitaphs of the Catacombs," p. 128.

least, it must be acknowledged both that it is reasonable in itself, and also that books and monuments give it a considerable degree of support. In investigating an obscure and difficult question of ancient history, it is no slight matter to find this perfect agreement between text and commentary, literary and monumental evidence, and that the two together establish a theory which accounts for all the known facts of the case, bringing them into complete harmony with one another and with probability.

If the theory makes a few steps in advance both of books and monuments, this is the very province and privilege of a skilled archæologist, who, like the naturalist, is allowed, after careful and complete examination of all the phenomena, to supply a lost link in the history, provided it be of the same pattern as all that precedes and follows it. In the present instance, the link has been before the learned world for more than a dozen years ; it has been carefully examined by several, and has met with universal acceptance. Moreover, it has stood the test of many new discoveries, not one of which has weakened its authority. On the contrary, they have often confirmed it ; so that, though the accumulation of new facts may have sometimes obliged our author to modify his statements on minor matters of detail, this foundation of the science of Subterranean Rome has never been shaken.

BOOK III.

HISTORY OF THE CATACOMBS.

CHAPTER I.

CATACOMBS OF THE FIRST CENTURY.

Chronology of the Catacombs intimately connected with their topography—The topography now made clear by De Rossi—Most ancient Catacombs are those of St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Priscilla, Cœmeterium Ostrianum, and of St. Domitilla—Their characteristics in point of architecture, painting, form of graves, and inscriptions.

No contemporary records of the beginning of the Catacombs,

IT must ever remain a subject of the deepest regret that nearly all Christian literature which was contemporary with the beginning of the Catacombs should have perished in the flames of the last terrible persecution by Diocletian. The memory of many interesting and important facts is thus lost beyond all hope of recovery; nevertheless, with the help of the materials which were enumerated in our last Book, and a few meagre allusions or brief statements by other authors who will be quoted presently, but still more by means of evidence furnished by the monuments of the Catacombs themselves, it is possible to reconstruct, in great measure, the history of the primitive Church; and in particular, of that chapter of it with which we are at present concerned, the Christian cemeteries.

Before our own time, it can scarcely be said that any attempt was made to write the history of the Catacombs. Bosio and his successors had collected and published a great mass of facts; but it remained to combine, compare, and generalise these facts, to establish their true meaning by appeal to written documents, to accumulate still more abundant materials by means of researches conducted according to more scientific methods, and finally to construct a history out of what before was a mere collection of documents. This has been the work of De Rossi, and to-day the foundations of the science of the Catacombs are very surely laid. The outlines, at least, of a chronological history are clearly defined, and many of the details of the picture are already filled in. New discoveries year by year add to the fulness of our knowledge, and will continue to do so, we may confidently anticipate, for many years to come. But the main substance of the work is done: the history of Subterranean Rome from one century to another may now be written, not as a series of rash conjectures, but corroborated by the testimony both of texts and monuments. The first important step towards this happy result was taken as soon as De Rossi recognised the value of those old Itineraries, which have been spoken of as professing to describe the locality of the holy places, the sepulchres of the martyrs, in Rome: for the history of the Catacombs is intimately connected with their topography. If we could only identify such and such cemeteries as the burial-places of martyrs whose history was known, we should have learnt something also about the chronology of the cemeteries. Accordingly, De Rossi's earliest subterranean researches were directed to this one end —viz., to test the trustworthiness of the documents which thus offered to be his guides. Having done this most successfully in several independent instances, chosen on different sides of the city, he was entitled to claim general credence for their authority, until they could be convicted of error. At any rate, the most sceptical critic could not object to his assuming the

yet De Rossi has recovered their history

by means of their topography.

truth of their assertions for a while, *argumenti causâ*, and using them, in the absence of any other more direct evidence, as the basis of an hypothesis; and in what we are going to reproduce from him in the present chapter he can hardly be said to have done more than this.

We have seen, from a study of the social circumstances and legal conditions under which the early Christians lived in Rome, that there is nothing impossible in supposing that they began from the very first to have their own cemeteries. Are there, then—it will be immediately asked—are there really existing in Rome Christian cemeteries and sepulchres of the apostolic age? and, if so, what are their characteristics? To these questions De Rossi replies as follows:—"Precisely in those cemeteries to which history or tradition assigns apostolic origin, I see, in the light of the most searching archæological criticism, the cradle both of Christian subterranean sepulchres, of Christian art, and of Christian inscriptions; there I find memorials of persons who appear to belong to the times of the Flavii and of Trajan; and finally, I discover precise dates of those times."

R.S., i. 185. *Bull.*, 1864, p. 50.

In De Rossi's volumes these statements are, of course, only the conclusions from a very wide and careful induction; and we must try to put before our readers such an abridgment of this as is compatible with our narrower limits.

The oldest Catacombs are

And first, let us see what those cemeteries are for which the Martyrologies, the Itineraries, or any other ecclesiastical traditions claim this venerable antiquity. They are those of St. Peter, on the Via Cornelia; of St. Paul, on the Via Ostiensis; of Priscilla (one of the family of Pudens), on the Via Salaria Nova; Ostrianum, where St. Peter is said to have baptized, on the Via Nomentana; and of Domitilla, on the Via Ardeatina, where were buried the martyrs Nereus and Achilleus, near to St. Petronilla, all three disciples of St. Peter. It would be possible to add to this list some two or three others, but for the present it will be more convenient to pass

them over. Of those that have been named we will speak each in its turn.

(1) The Vatican.

The crypts of the Vatican naturally have the first claim on our attention, but it is no longer possible to recognise in them the primitive form of a catacomb; it has been destroyed by the foundations of the vast Basilica which now guards the tomb of St. Peter. Nevertheless, there was once a general cemetery there, and the particulars which have reached us about the sepulchres that were found in it are all in harmony with the high antiquity to which it is referred. Old Martyrologies speak of the tomb of St. Peter as though it had been a public monument. The "Liber Pontificalis" states that Anacletus, the successor of Clement in the Apostolic See, "*built* and adorned the sepulchral monument (*construxit memoriam*) of Blessed Peter, since he had been ordained priest by St. Peter, and other burial-places where the bishops might be laid." It adds that he himself was buried there; and the same is recorded of Linus and Cletus, and of Evaristus, Sixtus I., Telesphorus, Hyginus, Pius I., Eleutherius, and Victor, the last of whom was buried A.D. 198; but, after St. Victor, no other Pontiff is recorded to have been buried there until St. Leo the Great, A.D. 461, when the series of pontifical burials at the Vatican was renewed. Early in the seventeenth century Urban VIII. made extensive excavations round the "confession" of St. Peter, in the course of which several marble sarcophagi came to light. One of these may be seen in the Museo Campana in Paris; and by the character of its sculpture (mere wavy spiral lines), the simplicity of its inscription, and the symbols engraved upon it,[1] it must certainly be assigned to a very early age. Another (as we learn from an eyewitness[2]) was inscribed with the single name LINUS, a name of extremely rare occurrence on Christian monuments; and, considering where it was found, it does not seem rash to believe with De

[1] The inscription and symbols may be seen in the "Epitaphs of the Catacombs," p. 164. [2] Torrigio, Le Sacre Grotte Vaticane, p. 61.

Rossi that this was the sepulchre of the immediate successor of St. Peter, of whom we read, *sepultus est juxta corpus Beati Petri.*

(2) St. Paul's on the Via Ostiensis.

From St. Peter's on the Vatican the mind passes naturally to the resting-place of the Apostle of the Gentiles on the other side of the river and of Rome. But here, too, the hill has been cut away to make room for the magnificent Basilica of St. Paul *extra muros;* and hence the greater part of the Catacomb of Lucina (or of Commodilla, for both these names occur in ancient records) has been destroyed, and what galleries yet remain are so choked with earth and ruins of various kinds as to be almost impassable. This, however, is of the less consequence, since we know that Boldetti read within this catacomb the most ancient inscription with a consular date that has come down to us.[1] It was scratched on the mortar round one of the graves, and the consulate of *Sura et Senecio* marks the year A.D. 107. A second was also found in the same place, on marble, recording the names of *Piso et Bolanus*, consuls A.D. 110. The same explorer discovered here also yet a third inscription, which De Rossi considers one of the most ancient of Christian Rome :—

DORMITIONI
T . FLA . EVTY
CHIO . QVI . VI
XIT . ANN . XVIIII
MES . XI . D . III
HVNC . LOCVM
DONABIT . M
ORBIVS HELI
VS . AMICVS
KARISSIMVS
KARE BALE

"As a place of sleep for Titus Flavius Eutychius, who lived nineteen years, eleven months, three days, his dearest friend, Marcus Orbius Helius, gave this grave. Farewell, beloved." [2]

[1] There is, indeed, a more ancient dated Christian inscription of the third year of Vespasian—*i.e.*, A.D. 72; but, unfortunately, it is no longer possible to ascertain to what cemetery this inscription belonged. Inscript. Christian., tom. i. p. 3, No. 2.

[2] Marangoni's copy of this inscription, now in the library of St. Mary's

The first word of this inscription, the place where it was found, and certain symbols rudely carved between the last two words (apparently intended to represent two loaves and two fishes), show this inscription to be Christian; while the style, the ancient nomenclature differing from the usual Christian epitaphs, and the prænomen, T. Flavius, point to the age of the Flavian Emperors—*i.e.*, the end of the first century. It can hardly be a mere accident that these rare and contemporaneous dates should have been discovered in the same place and precisely in the cemetery where, less than forty years before, had been deposited the body of the Apostle Paul. They may be taken as certain proofs that a catacomb was begun here not long after his martyrdom.

(3) Priscilla, on the Via Salaria.

The Cemetery of Priscilla, on the Via Salaria Nova, is said to have been dug in the property of the family of Pudens, converted by the Apostles; and a particular chapel in the middle of it—known, from the language of its inscriptions, as the *Cappella Greca*—was manifestly the centre or original nucleus round which the whole cemetery was in due time developed. Everything in this chapel betokens the highest antiquity; it was clearly made before the system of excavation which afterwards became normal had been devised. It is not simply hewn out of the tufa, but regularly constructed with bricks and mortar. There are no graves in the walls; it was made only to receive sarcophagi, not one of which, unhappily, has survived to our time, but only numerous fragments have been collected, both by Bosio and De Rossi. It was beautifully decorated with ornamental stucco-work, worthy of being compared with some of the best work of Pagan times; with frescoes also, quite of classical style, the scenes depicted in

College, Oscott, reads ME instead of MES in the fifth line. Another *stela* of exactly the same kind may be seen in the gallery at the Lateran Museum in front of Column XIV. It is to the memory of a child aged nine years, and at the end of it are carved an anchor and a fish, the two oldest Christian emblems. He says it was found in the Cemetery of Lucina, *indeque furto ablata.*

most of them differing widely from the usual well-known subjects which, in after-times, when Christian symbolism had assumed a more fixed and stereotyped character, repeat themselves so frequently. It has also a special family of inscriptions, traced in vermilion on the tiles, and quite unlike later Christian epitaphs, being sometimes bare names, or, if anything be added, it is the apostolic salutation, PAX TECUM or TIBI.[1] The only symbol used is the most ancient of all, the anchor. The characters of the incised inscriptions are classical in form. The names also are classical, such as TITUS FLAVIUS FELICISSIMUS, FELIX AMPLIATUS, and others. In a word, there are many and important variations from the uniformity of Christian subterranean cemeteries, such as we find them in the third century, and they all point to a date anterior to any such systematic arrangement.

(4) Cœmeterium Ostrianum, or Fons Petri,

In certain Acts of Pope Liberius mention is made of the Cœmeterium Ostrianum as being "not far from the Cemetery of Novella, which was on the third mile of the Via Salaria." When Panvinius compiled his catalogue of the cemeteries,[2] he set down this as having been the oldest of all, "because it was in use when St. Peter preached the faith to the Romans." Bosio and all other antiquarians had failed to identify it, but De Rossi's more scientific mode of procedure has been more successful. He observed that the Abbot John, in the Papyrus MS.[3] at Monza, in which he gives a list of oils from the lamps before the celebrated shrines of Rome which he visited, after "the oil of St. Agnes and many others" on the Via Nomentana, and before "the oil of St. Vitalis, St. Alexander, and others on the Via Salaria," mentions "oil from the chair where Peter the apostle first sat (*prius sedit*)," as though this were situated somewhere between the roads that have been named. In like manner, in the index of the cemeteries in the "Liber Mirabilium," between that of St. Agnes and that of St. Pris-

[1] See "Epitaphs of the Catacombs," p. 32.

[2] See page 26. [3] See page 25.

cilla, that is, between the same two roads, is placed the cemetery of the font of St. Peter (*fontis S. Petri*—in other copies, *Ad Nymphas S. Petri*), near the Basilica of St. Emerentiana. Now, this situation exactly corresponds with that of the cemetery upon which Father Marchi bestowed his chief labours, and which has therefore become so familiar to all Roman visitors under the name of the Catacomb of St. Agnes; but the galleries and chambers which he recovered there do not bear marks of greater antiquity than the third century. Bosio, however, tells us that he went down by a square hole into a crypt, which struck him as remarkable, both for the frequency of the *luminaria* and the beauty of the ornamentation. Near one of these light-holes, which he found still open, "one sees," he writes, "without the aid of a candle, a large niche like a tribune, with leaves in stucco-work, and within the niche are some red letters, which are almost all obliterated and illegible, but some few which remain are beautifully formed: under that niche must anciently have been the altar, the place being sufficiently spacious."[1] De Rossi observes that it is now well ascertained that the ancient custom was to place in the tribune, not the altar, but the pontifical chair; and this description by Bosio seemed to him therefore to read like an account of the crypt where was formerly venerated on the 18th of January "the chair in which Peter first sat," and which was also known in the Martyrologies of Ado and Bede as the *Cœmeterium majus*, or *Cœmeterium ad Nymphas*, where Peter baptized; and he expressed an earnest hope that it might be once more brought to light. Thanks to the devotion and generosity of the prelate under whose ground it happened to lie, this hope has now been realised.

lately rediscovered.

Monsignor Crostarosa carried on the work of excavation at his own expense until the long-lost crypt was discovered, and the keen and practised eye of one of De Rossi's pupils deciphered a few letters of the inscription which had baffled Bosio

[1] Roma Sott., p. 438.

three hundred years ago. Now that Signor Armellini has published his discovery, others also can read the same letters, and all agree that De Rossi's conjectures have been completely

FIG. 8.—*Interior of Chapel recently recovered in Cœmeterium Ostrianum; the Chapel in which was preserved "the chair where Peter the Apostle first sat."*

verified. The first letters that are legible, AMAS, naturally suggest the name of Pope Damasus, who is sure to have illus-

trated this place in some way or other, if it be what we suppose it to be; the letters, however, are printed, not engraved, as most of the inscriptions were that were set up by that Pontiff. Presently we come upon SANC P, in which we are tempted at once to read the name of the great apostle; possibly, however, they might have referred to the martyr Papias, who was buried in this cemetery. Other letters follow after a short interval, C EMER IANTI, and these can hardly stand for any other than St. Emerentiana.[1]

Our engraving is on too small a scale to exhibit the letters distinctly, but it will enable our readers to understand the general appearance of the chamber thus happily recovered. They will recognise in the round pillar which stands opposite the chair a clear proof of the veneration in which the chamber was once held; for this is a feature common to all the most important historical crypts, being used to support the vase of perfumed oils, in which lighted wicks were always floating, and from which drops were taken and treasured as sacred relics. It was from the vase on this pillar that the Abbot John sent to Theodolinda "oil from the chair where Peter the Apostle first sat."

Of course, if this evidence is admitted, the primitive antiquity of this catacomb is at once established; but even before this discovery was made, it can hardly be considered to have been doubtful. For De Rossi had long since pointed out that in a particular part of it (which now proves to be close to the original centre of the whole), there was a large number of epitaphs of most ancient type, forming quite a class by themselves, not painted on tiles, as those we saw in the Cemetery of Priscilla, but incised on marble, in letters of beautifully classical shape, bearing no Christian symbol but the anchor and (once) the fish, having only one Christian acclamation, and that the first that came into use, VIVAS IN DEO. Their style is as

[1] Scoperta della cripta di Santa Emerenziana per Mariano Armellini. Roma, 1877.

laconic as possible; merely the names, or with the addition, as on Pagan tombstones, of the name and relationship of those who set up the *titulus*, and the epithet *dulcissimus* or (once or twice) *incomparabilis*. Of the men, the three names are often given; of the women, the *gentilitium* and the *cognomen*. In nearly a hundred instances the *gentilitia* are of Claudii, Flavii, Ulpii, and others, which carry us back to the period between Nero and the first of the Antonines—*i.e.*, to the age of those who either heard the Apostles themselves, or at least their first disciples. Once the deceased is stated to have been the freedwoman of Lucius Clodius Clemens.[1]

In fact, these epitaphs vary so little from the old classical type, that had they not been seen by Marini and other competent witnesses in their original position, had not a fresh batch of them been discovered *in situ* in our own day, and some few of them been marked with a Christian symbol, we might have hesitated whether they ought not rather to be classed among Pagan than Christian monuments. As it is, we are sure that the persons whose graves they marked must have lived in the very earliest Christian ages.

Bull., 1871, 39–34.

(5) Cemetery of St. Domitilla at Tor Marancia.

The Cemetery of St. Domitilla, or of her chamberlains, SS. Nereus and Achilleus, on the Via Ardeatina, is the last which we mentioned as claiming to be of the same age, and its claim deserves a more detailed examination, because it is connected with what has been already mentioned as one of the most remarkable facts in the annals of the early Church—the profession of the Christian faith by some of the imperial family, this Domitilla being no other than the niece of Vespasian, who was banished[2] to the island of Ponza. St. Jerome[3] tells us that in his days this island was frequented by pious Christian pilgrims, "who delighted to visit with devotion the cells in which Flavia Domitilla had suffered a lifelong martyrdom." Whether she really shed her blood at the last for the faith is

[1] See "Epitaphs of the Catacombs," p. 34.

[2] See page 86. [3] Ep. ad Eustoch., p. 86.

uncertain, the Acts of SS. Nereus and Achilleus being of doubtful authenticity. They state, however, that she and one of her female companions were buried in a sarcophagus at Terracina, but that her chamberlains (who are said to have been baptized by St. Peter) suffered death by the sword, and were buried in a cemetery about a mile and a half out of Rome, on the Via Ardeatina, in a farm belonging to their mistress. The farm, now known by the name of Tor Marancia, is situated just at this distance from Rome, and on the road named; and an inscription which has been found there shows clearly that it once belonged to this very person, Flavia Domitilla. It gives the measurements of a sepulchral area of 35 feet in front and 40 into the field, whether for a Pagan or a Christian monument we cannot say; but at all events, the ground had been granted to one Sergius Cornelius Julianus, *ex indulgentiâ Flaviæ Domitillæ, neptis Vespasiani;* another, probably belonging to the same place, records a similar grant, *ex beneficio* of the same lady. Moreover, it is a curious circumstance well worth mentioning, that within the cemetery which underlies this farm, or at least in its immediate neighbourhood, two or three other inscriptions have been found of a Bruttia Crispina and others of the Gens Bruttia, from which we are tempted to conjecture that there may have been some sort of connection between the two families, and that this perhaps was the reason which induced Bruttius the historian to make special mention of the exile of Domitilla in his narrative of the public events of his day.[1] *O.H.*, 5422, 5423.

Anyhow, it is certain that Domitilla had property in this place; and though Bosio imagined this cemetery to be that of St. Callixtus, nobody now doubts that it is really that which in olden times was known as *Cœmeterium Domitillæ, Nerei et Achillei, ad St. Petronillam, Viâ Ardeatinâ.*

Before we descend into it, it will be well to say a few words about this new name which thus enters into the title. St. St. Petronilla.

[1] See page 86.

Petronilla is described in the Martyrologies[1] as having been "the daughter of St. Peter," and some critics have imagined that this word denoted a real natural relationship, and not merely a spiritual one, as in the analogous case of St. Mark, whom St. Peter himself calls his "son."[2] They have even argued that the very name indicated a blood-relationship with the Prince of the Apostles. But this is a mistake. Baronius[3] long since pointed out that Petronilla could not, according to Roman usage, be derived from Petrus, but rather from Petronius, as Priscilla from Priscus, Drusilla from Drusus, &c. Moreover, we now know that she bore another name, which connects her with a noble Roman family, not with the poor Jewish fisherman; for on the sarcophagus in which she was buried were inscribed the two names AURELIÆ PETRONILLÆ. Now the name of Petro was no stranger to the family of Domitilla; for Titus Flavius Petro was the father of the first T. Flavius Sabinus;[4] and if Petronilla was descended from this Petro, as she may have been on her mother's side, it is at once accounted for how she found her place of burial on the property of her relative Domitilla.

Bull., 1865, pp. 18, 46.

Leaving this, however, for the present, let us descend into the catacomb itself, and we shall find there abundant proofs both of its identity and its extreme antiquity. We go down by a very long staircase, of modern work indeed, but a restoration (in our own time) of what had been here originally. It takes us down to the second level of excavation, and lands us in one of the widest corridors to be seen in all the Catacombs. Presently we come to a chamber, or antechamber, illuminated by the largest *luminare* yet discovered. Opening out of this is another chamber, unlike in many respects the ordinary family vaults of the Catacombs. Originally there were no graves dug in the walls, but only one *arcosolium* on the left-hand side of the entrance; at a somewhat later period another *arcosolium*

[1] Acta SS. Maii, iii. p. 11, No. 18.
[2] 1 Peter v. 13.
[3] Annal. ad an. 69, No. 32.
[4] Suetonius in Vespas., 1.

was made on the opposite side. The walls were covered with the finest stucco, and then decorated with ornamental devices, bearing so close a resemblance to the decoration of Pagan chambers of the same date, that the whole might almost be mistaken for a Pagan monument, were it not for the figure of the Good Shepherd which occupies the centre of the ceiling. The *arcosolium* is even decorated with landscape painting, such as may be seen on the walls of private houses at Pompeii, but of which only one other example, we believe, has been found in the Roman Catacombs. At no great distance from this chamber is that other which had been made by M. Antonius Restitutus, "for himself and those of his family who believed in the Lord."[1] *R.S.*, i. 188.

More recently, still more remarkable discoveries have been made in the same neighbourhood. One of these De Rossi unhesitatingly announces as a monument of some member of the Flavian family, who lived and died in the days of Domitian. It is certainly one of the most ancient Christian monuments yet discovered in the Catacombs. Its position close to the highway; its front of fine brickwork, with a cornice of terra-cotta, with the usual space over the doorway for an inscription (which has now, alas! perished); the spaciousness of its gallery, with only four or five separate niches prepared for as many sarcophagi; the fine stucco on the wall; the eminently classical character of its decorations; all these particulars make it perfectly clear that it was the monument of a family of distinction, excavated at great cost and without the slightest attempt at concealment. On each side of the entrance there was added at a somewhat later period —probably in the third century—a building, the exact size and form of which cannot yet be determined for want of sufficient excavation, but it seems to have been of irregular shape, and to have completely enclosed the original portico. On the left-hand side (*b*) are several small cells, ornamented

[1] See page 107.

with stucco and red paint, on which one may still recognise a few birds and traces of other figures, reminding one of what is to be seen on the walls of old Roman houses and tombs. One of these cells is still perfect, and in it is a round well, whilst hard by is a reservoir for water, and a fountain, of which the basin is still preserved. A bench of stone runs along the wall of this cell, and also along the whole of the left-hand wall of the original *atrium*. Similarly on the right

FIG. 9.—*Original Entrance to Cemetery of Domitilla.*

side (*c*) of the *atrium*, a low stone bench running round the wall is only interrupted in two places by openings into small sepulchral chambers.

It is impossible to misunderstand the origin and purpose of this building. It was built at a time when, as we shall presently see, the Christian cemeteries ceased to be the private property of the families who originally began them, and became the property of the Church as a corporation, and here were celebrated the *agapæ* or love feasts. This new building, attached to the original entrance of the tomb, was what would have been called in the case of a Pagan *collegium* the *schola*, or place of meeting and entertainment for the

members, or the *diæta quæ est juncta monumento*, or the *solarium tectum in quo populus epuletur*. The remains of a staircase are still visible near the fountain, by which access was gained to some upper chamber now destroyed, but which was probably once the place of residence for the guardian of the monument, just as we find attached to Pagan monuments of the same period. *I.R.N.*, 3545. *O.H.*, 2417. *O.H.*, 4368.

After descending two steps from the portico (*a*), a broad pathway slopes gradually for a short distance, leaving (as we have said) only a few recesses (two on either side) capable of receiving each a large sarcophagus, all of which, however, have long since been removed. One of these recesses was enlarged at a subsequent period, and a tomb in the form of an *arcosolium* made in it; and the whole *hypogæum* was ultimately united by additional galleries to the adjacent catacomb. Before this was done, however, the vestibule had been filled with sarcophagi of various sizes, of which numerous fragments may still be seen lying about, showing that there were no subjects, either Pagan or Christian, carved upon them, but mere ornamentation of dolphins, sea-horses, &c. We find other sarcophagi of terra-cotta buried underneath the ground; and the date even of the last of these seems not to come below the middle of the second century. Fragments of tiles, too, lying about belong to the same period, the years 123, 137, &c. And so do the names, which may still be traced, of Claudii, Flavii, Ulpii, and Aurelii.

In passing from the vestibule into the catacomb, we seem to recognise the transition from the use of the sarcophagus to that of the common shelf-like grave in the wall; for in the first gallery on the left we find two graves which, though really mere shelves, are so disguised by white plaster on the outside as to present to passers-by the complete outward appearance of a sarcophagus. Beyond these graves, a very narrow opening admits to a *cubiculum* of singular shape, reminding us of the tombs in Etruria and Palestine, and which we may well believe to

have been one of the first productions of Christian sepulchral architecture. In the gallery which opens from the other side of the *ambulacrum*, some tombs, still closed, bear the names of the deceased written in black on very large tiles—just like those which we have seen in the most ancient part of the catacomb of St. Priscilla; and the inscriptions on the other graves are all of the simplest and oldest form. Lastly, the whole of the vaulted roof of the gallery is covered with the most exquisitely graceful designs, of the branches of a vine (with birds and winged genii among them) trailing with all the freedom of nature over the whole walls, not fearing any interruption by graves, nor confined by any of those lines of geometrical symmetry which characterise similar productions in the next century. Here also is that other specimen we have alluded to of landscape painting—two persons also sitting at a feast, with bread and fish only on the table; a man fishing; a sheep feeding near a tree; and Daniel in the lions' den,[1] may still be seen here, or at least fragments of them may be traced; for unfortunately their great beauty and superior style of execution has attracted the spoiler, and attempts have been made in some former generation to detach them from the wall; a process which, while it effectually ruined them for those who should come after, can never have yielded anything but a handful of mortar and broken *tufa* to the plunderers themselves. Would that we could have seen these chambers and vestibule in their original condition! Perhaps we should have found, as De Rossi conjectures, that it was the very *memoria* of Flavius Clemens himself, the martyred consul and husband of one of the Domitillas, whose remains are believed to have been afterwards translated to the Basilica of St. Clement within the walls. At any rate, we are quite sure that we have been here

Bull., 1865, 22–24, 33–46, 89–99.

[1] The fragment which remains of the last picture, small as it is, displays a much higher skill in execution than any other representation of the same subject that we have seen throughout the Catacombs. It is probably the most ancient. A copy of it will be given in Volume II., on Christian Art.

brought face to face with one of the earliest specimens of Christian subterranean burial in Rome; and it shows us the sense of liberty and security under which it was executed. Not only was there no attempt at concealment of the sepulchre; but even the paintings of Biblical subjects which we have described were placed close to the entrance, and where they could be seen by the light of day.

General conclusions from an examination of these cemeteries.

We have now completed our examination of the principal catacombs for which a claim is made to apostolic antiquity; and it will be well for us to take a brief review of the results to be gathered from our visits. They may be stated thus :—

The local traditions of ancient Christian Rome have come down to us, partly embodied in the Acts of the Martyrs; partly in the stories that were told to foreigners visiting the city in the seventh and eighth centuries, and by them committed to writing in Itineraries; partly in the "Book of the Wonders of Rome" and the "Books of Indulgences and Relics of Rome," compiled both for the use of strangers and of citizens, the one in the latter half of the tenth century, the other perhaps not earlier than the twelfth; partly also, but more sparingly, in the scattered notices of a few mediæval writers. From a diligent comparison of all these various authorities, it is gathered that some five or six of the subterranean cemeteries of Rome were believed to have had their origin in apostolic times; and in every one of these instances, so far as we have an opportunity of examining them, something peculiar has been either noted by our predecessors or seen by ourselves which gives countenance to the tradition. When these peculiarities are brought together, they are found to be in perfect harmony, not only with one another, but also with what we should have been led to expect from a careful consideration of the period to which they are supposed to belong. The peculiarities are such as these :—Paintings in the most classical style, and scarcely, if at all, inferior in execution to the best specimens

of contemporary Pagan art; a system of ornamentation in fine stucco such as has not yet been found in any other Christian subterranean work; crypts of peculiar shape and considerable dimensions, not hewn out of the bare rock, but carefully, and even elegantly, built with pilasters and cornices of bricks or terra-cotta; no narrow galleries with shelf-like graves thickly pierced in their walls, but spacious *ambulacra*, with painted walls, and large recesses provided only for the reception of sarcophagi; whole families of inscriptions, with classical names, and very few distinctly Christian forms of speech; and lastly, actual dates of the first or second century. It is impossible that such a marvellous uniformity of phenomena, collected with most patient accuracy from different and distant cemeteries on all sides of the city, and from authors writing at so many different periods, should be the result of accident or of preconceived opinion. In fact, it cannot be said that there was any preconceived opinion about it at all; or, if there was, certainly the opinion that was in vogue up to the middle of this century was diametrically opposed to that which has now been enunciated by De Rossi, and is gaining universal acceptance among those who have an opportunity of examining the monuments for themselves. His opinion has been the result of careful observation; it is the fruit of the phenomena, not their cause.

Whereas, then, former writers have always taken it for granted that the first beginnings of Roma Sotterranea must have been poor and mean and insignificant, and that any appearance of subterranean works on a large scale, or richly decorated, must necessarily belong to a later or more peaceful age, it is now certain that this statement cannot be reconciled with the monuments and facts that modern discovery has brought to light. Nor can any thoughtful and impartial judge refuse to acknowledge in the social and political condition of the first Roman Christians, and in the laws and usages of Roman burial, an adequate explanation of all that is thus thrown back on the first and second centuries.

CHAPTER II.

CATACOMBS OF THE SECOND CENTURY.

Four Cemeteries of the Second Century, of St. Hermes, Maximus, the Jordani, Prætextatus—The last identified in 1850*—Six principal monuments of Martyrs in it—Some of these identified—Others still unknown.*

THE names which tradition and the most ancient records have always connected with the cemeteries described in the last chapter oblige us to refer their beginnings to the first century. There are three or four other cemeteries of which we are sure that they existed in the next century, but we are unable to fix the date of their origin with any greater precision. Such are the Catacombs of St. Hermes, to whose martyrdom we cannot assign a later date than the reign of Hadrian, and who was buried on the Via Salaria Vetus; of Maximus and of the Jordani, on the Via Salaria Nova; and of Prætextatus, on the Via Appia. Four Catacombs of the second century.

Of most of these we are not able to say much, as, though De Rossi has succeeded in identifying them all, he has not yet been able to explore them. Of the first, the Catacomb of St. Hermes, he has published an inscription bearing the date of A.D. 234, and another much older, which deserves to be reproduced in this place. The name Athenais, which occurs in it, is very rarely found after the second century; the acclamation *pax tecum* is very rare on Roman epitaphs, and never found except on epitaphs of the highest antiquity; and the title which the father gives to himself, as freedman of the Emperor, is extremely rare on the epitaphs of the Catacombs at any (1.) St. Hermes.

time.[1] On the whole, De Rossi ascribes the inscription to the reign of one of the Antonines. It runs thus :—

Bull., 1873, p. 52.

XVIII KAL SEPT
AURELIUS PRIMUS
· AUGLIB · TABUL ·
ET COCCEIA · ATHENAIS
FILIÆ FECERUNT ·
AURELIÆ PROCOPENI
QUE BIXIT · ANN · XIII · MESIBUS III
DIEBUS · XIIII · PAX · TECU ·

"Aurelius Primus, freedman of the Emperor, accountant (or notary), and Cocceia Athenais made this for their daughter Aurelia Procope, who lived 13 years, 3 months, and 14 days. Peace be with thee. August 15th."

(2.) Maximus.
(3.) The Jordani.
(4.) Prætextatus.
Last three connected with history of St. Felicitas.

The other three cemeteries which we mentioned are all connected with one martyrdom—viz., that of St. Felicitas and her sons—a martyrdom which enjoyed a merited pre-eminence in the records of the ancient Roman Church, and of which the authentic Acts have been happily preserved to us. It happened under Marcus Aurelius Antoninus in the year 162, and was intended to satisfy the angry passions of the people under circumstances of unusual discontent and alarm. Lucius Verus, the other Emperor, was in the East fighting against the Parthians; there were wars also, or rumours of wars, both in Britain and in Germany; there had been a famine the year before, and now there was a disastrous inundation of the Tiber. Under these circumstances, what we learn from Tertullian to have been the usual cry of the Pagan populace when dispirited and frightened, *Christianos ad leones*, was loudly raised; and the distinguished rank, and no less distinguished excellence, of the widow Felicitas and her family seem to have pointed her out as the most suitable victim. In order the more easily to content the people and to spread the knowledge of what was being done, the victims were sent before different judges, and the sentences were executed in different quarters of the city. The Acts are silent both as to the day on which

Bull., 1863, p. 19.

[1] See "Epitaphs of the Catacombs," p. 141.

they suffered, and the places in which they were buried—a strong evidence, we may observe, of their high antiquity; for had they not been written contemporaneously with the event, these circumstances, afterwards so famous, would certainly not have been omitted; but they tell us that Januarius, the eldest of the seven sons, suffered alone; so did Silanus, the youngest; two others, Felix and Philip, suffered together; so did Alexander, Vitalis, and Martial; and finally, Felicitas, their heroic mother. And the old Calendars and Martyrologies testify to festivals being kept on the 10th of July in the Cemetery of Prætextatus, in honour of Januarius; of Maximus, in honour of Felicitas and Silanus; of Priscilla, in honour of Felix and Philip; of the Jordani, in honour of the rest. A Roman inscription, probably before the time of Constantine, calls this day "the day of the martyrs," as though it enjoyed some singular prerogative in the memory of the Roman people; and, as time went on, some of the cemeteries we have mentioned received their names from those members of this heroic family who lay there.

Cemeteries called by names of proprietors of the soil.

In the more ancient records, the cemeteries are called by the names of private individuals, of whose history no particulars have reached us, but who were doubtless the original proprietors of the ground under which the burial was made, and who still remained in the eyes of the law the owners of the property. Thus, in the ancient Bucherian Calendar (as it is called),[1] a document of the fourth century, we read on the 10th of July, *Felicis et Philippi in Priscillæ, et in Jordanorum, Martialis, Vitalis et Alexandri, et in Maximi Silani, et in Prætextati Januarii;* and the same notice appears in the liturgical books of the Roman Church in the days of Leo the Great, A.D. 450; but in later times, the names of the unknown private individuals were gradually dropped, and those of the martyrs took their places; so that the Cemetery of Maximus became that of St. Felicitas, just as that which had once been

[1] See page 19.

known as the Cemetery of Domitilla passed under the names of SS. Nereus, Achilleus, and Petronilla; that of Callixtus as the Cemetery of St. Sixtus and St. Cecilia, and that of Prætextatus became *ad S. Januarium Viâ Appiâ.*

Catacomb of Prætextatus.

In the present chapter we must confine ourselves to the Cemetery of Prætextatus, as this is the only one out of the four cemeteries mentioned in which any extensive excavations have been made in modern times. It lies under a field and vineyard on the left-hand side of the Via Appia, between the first and second milestone from Rome, near the circus of Maxentius and the little building now known as the Church of St. Urban *alla Caffarella*, but which was originally raised by Herodes Atticus, the famous tutor of Marcus Aurelius, as a memorial of his wife, who died A.D. 161. It is generally called in the Itineraries *Cœmeterium Prætextati ad S. Januarium Viâ Appiâ;* but Januarius was not the first martyr who was buried there. We have notices of another, a tribune named Quirinus, who suffered martyrdom with his daughter Balbina in the reign of Hadrian. Januarius, as we have seen, suffered under Marcus Aurelius, A.D. 162. Then, in the third place, there were SS. Valerian and Tiburtius, the husband and brother-in-law of St. Cecilia, together with their companion St. Maximus, whose passion (as we shall show in a future chapter) is now assigned to the year 177, or thereabouts; fourthly, a bishop named Urban, whose history is closely mixed up with that of the last-mentioned martyrs; fifthly, SS. Felicissimus and Agapitus, two of the deacons of Pope Sixtus II., who were martyred together with that Pope in this very cemetery during the persecution of Valerian, A.D. 258; and lastly, St. Zeno, of whom we know nothing with certainty beyond the fact of his martyrdom. Of these martyrs, some had *cellæ* or *memoriæ*, small monumental chapels above ground—viz., St. Zeno, St. Valerian, and his two companions. The rest in the seventh and eighth centuries were still honoured in their subterranean tombs. They all lay at no great distance from one another in

Bull., 1863, pp. 1–6, 17–22; 1870, 42–48; 1872, 45–81.

Its situation.

Principal monuments.

one grand corridor, which the most accurate of our ancient guides calls a large cave (*spelunca magna*). *R.S.*, i. 180.

In the years between 1847 and 1850 Father Marchi and De Rossi explored as much of the subterranean cemetery as they could gain access to from the ruins of two buildings—the one round, the other rectangular—which still remain in the vineyard, and which De Rossi insisted upon identifying as ruins of the aforenamed basilicas. They did not penetrate below the first level of the excavation, which had been already visited and plundered. They found Latin epitaphs, several of them dated, and mostly of the fourth century; an *arcosolium*, apparently of the same period, on the front of which was a painting of a lamb between two wolves, with legend of SUSANNA and SENIORIS (for *Seniores*); and in the arch three figures, with the names of PETRUS, PAULUS, and SUSTUS. On the authority of this painting, Father Marchi named this part of the catacomb "the Cemetery of St. Sixtus;" and under this name some of its contents appear in the work of M. Perret. It deserved to be so called on one account, as St. Sixtus was really martyred in it; but he was not buried here, and his name was not really given to it in ancient times. In 1850 they were able to penetrate to a lower level, where they found a number of graves unopened, with short Greek epitaphs, beautifully carved, and often ornamented with very ancient symbols. This was evidently more ancient than what they had seen before, and it had scarcely been plundered at all. A corridor of unusual height and width was supported by arches of solid masonry, and illuminated by *luminaria;*[1] most of the inscriptions on the gravestones were in the Greek language, and all were laconic in style, and ornamented only with the earliest Christian symbols. "Here," says De Rossi, "in this subterranean gallery I conceived the idea which was henceforward to direct my labours; I saw it all clearly in my understanding, and I matured my plan for a new *Roma Sotterranea.*"

Parts of it discovered in 1847

and 1850;

Bull., 1872, p. 64.

[1] See Plate I.

The discoveries which were made in an adjacent *cubiculum* were well calculated to excite and maintain his enthusiasm. An *arcosolium*, carefully concealed by a wall, was covered with a slab of marble, but this *mensa* was not secured in its place in the ordinary manner by cement, but could be raised by means of two massive bronze rings inserted for the purpose. On raising it they found the whole interior of the tomb cased with marble, and two bodies lying side by side, one wrapped in cloth of gold, the other in purple; but there was not a word to say whose bodies had been here buried with so much honour. The frescoes of the chamber represented scenes from the Gospel history, of which we have but rare examples in the Catacombs. The Good Shepherd was in the centre of the roof, and on the walls were the woman with the issue of blood at the feet of our Lord, the woman of Samaria at the well, and the soldiers striking His head with a reed,[1] together with other subjects which it was impossible to distinguish. The execution of these paintings was so good that competent judges refused to assign to them a later date than the earliest part of the third century; some thought it more probable that they were of the second: they were the best which had ever yet been discovered in the Catacombs, for those which we have mentioned in our account of the Cemetery of Domitilla did not come to light till several years afterwards, 1865. The floor of the chapel had been lowered after it had been made, and in one of the graves excavated in this lowest part of the wall was the following inscription:—

ЄΥΜΕΡΙΤΩ ΟΥΡΑΝΙΑ
ΘΥΓΑΤΗΡ ΗΡΩΔΗϹ

"May Urania, daughter of Herod, have a happy lot."[2]

The mention of the name of the father is rare in the ancient Christian epitaphs; it suggests that Herod was a person of

[1] Imperfect representations of these three subjects are given by Mr. Parker in his work on the Catacombs (Plates XIII. and XIV.), and by him erroneously described as Pagan. More correct copies may be seen in P. Garrucci's Storia dell' Arte Cristiana, tom. ii. tav. 38, 39.

[2] *εὐμερίτω* for *ἐνμοιρείτω* and *Ἡρώδης* for *Ἡρώδου*.

some distinction. The form of the letters would assign the inscription to the same early date as the paintings; and thus everything conspires to turn our thoughts to the Herodes Atticus already spoken of, and an archæologist[1] can hardly be condemned for rashness who ventures to conjecture that one of this man's daughters had the happiness of embracing the Christian faith.

In 1852 De Rossi read a paper to the *Pontificia Academia di Archeologia*, in which, whilst announcing some of these discoveries, he argued, solely on topographical grounds, that this must certainly have been a part of the cemetery formerly known by the name of Prætextatus; and later discoveries demonstrated the truth of his reasoning. In 1857 the labourers employed in the Catacombs came here to seek for stones, tiles, or other materials for repairs which they were making in St. Callixtus', and in the course of their quest they opened a way to the ruins of a very large and beautiful crypt on the same level with that we have just been speaking of. As soon as De Rossi had scrambled through the opening, he looked about for the usual *arcosolium;* but of this there was no sign. Yet it was clear that the absence of this ordinary feature of a chapel in the Catacombs in no way detracted from its value, nor indicated that this was a chamber without a history. On the contrary, further examination revealed the fact that this crypt was not hewn out of the living rock, but that, though under ground, it had been all built with solid masonry, and that three of its sides had been originally intended only for three sarcophagi. It had once been lined throughout with Greek marble, and its outer face, or face towards the interior of the cemetery, was a piece of excellent yellow brickwork, ornamented with pilasters of the same material in red, and cornices of terra-cotta, just like the Pagan sepulchres on the Latin or Appian roads. The workmanship points clearly to an early date, and specimens of Pagan architecture of the same kind,—notably the recently dis-

and 1857.

Tomb of St. Januarius.

Its architecture and decoration of second century.

Bull., 1863, pp. 19, 90.

[1] F. Lenormant, Revue Archeologique, 1864, p. 376.

covered barracks of the *Vigiles* of the seventh cohort, in Trastevere,—would lead us to fix the latter half of the second century as a probable date for its erection.

A glance at the accompanying woodcuts will show the remarkable resemblance in the brickwork of these monuments; and the Acts of the Saints explain to us why the subterranean monu-

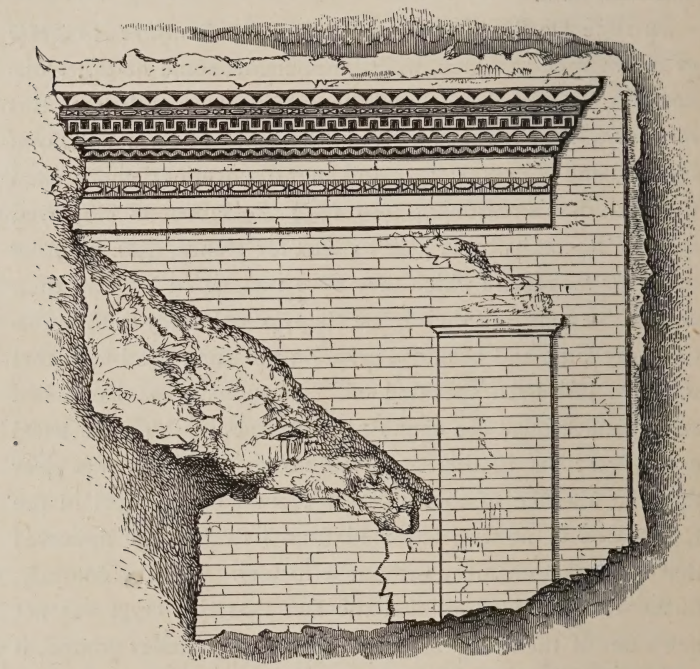


FIG. 10.—*Brick Wall with Terra-cotta Cornices on one side of the Crypt in which Januarius was buried.*

ment was built with bricks, and not hewn in the usual manner out of the rock—viz., because the Christian who made it, Marmenia, or rather Armenia,[1] had caused it to be excavated immediately below her own house. Now that we see it, we understand

[1] This is a correction of the text, suggested by De Rossi, who observes that Marmenia is not a Roman name, whereas there was a noble family bearing the name Armenius, and in this same cemetery he has found the tombstone of one Armenia Felicitas, written in Greek. Bull., 1872, p. 68.

the precise meaning of the words used by the Itineraries describing it—viz., "a large square cavern, most firmly built" (*ingens antrum quadratum, et firmissimæ fabricæ*).

The vault of the chapel, which is elliptical, terminating in a square lighthole at the top, is most elaborately painted in fresco

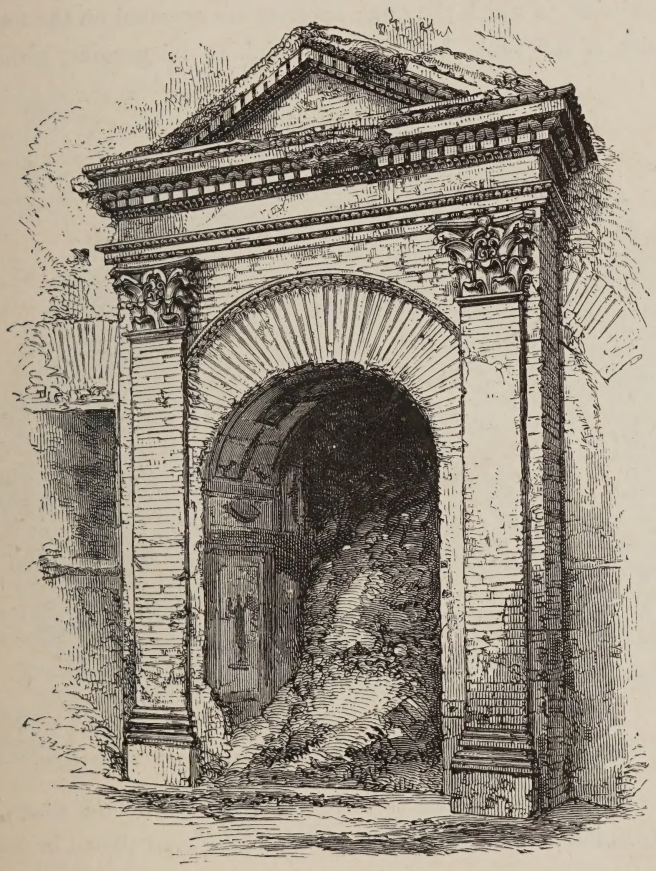


Fig. 11.—*Brick Archway with Terra-cotta Cornices in the Barracks of the Vigiles of the Seventh Cohort, lately discovered in Trastevere.*

on a fine white plaster, and in a style by no means inferior to the best classical productions of the age. It is divided into four bands of wreaths, one of roses, another of ears of corn,[1]

[1] This band has been accidentally omitted in our woodcut.

a third of vine-leaves and grapes (and in all these, birds are introduced visiting their young in nests), and the last or highest, of leaves of laurel or the bay-tree, or, as Father Garrucci believes,[1] branches of the olive-tree. Below these bands is another border, more injured by time, but still easily distinguishable, in which the same subjects are repeated on the four sides of the vault, but with the addition of persons, giving

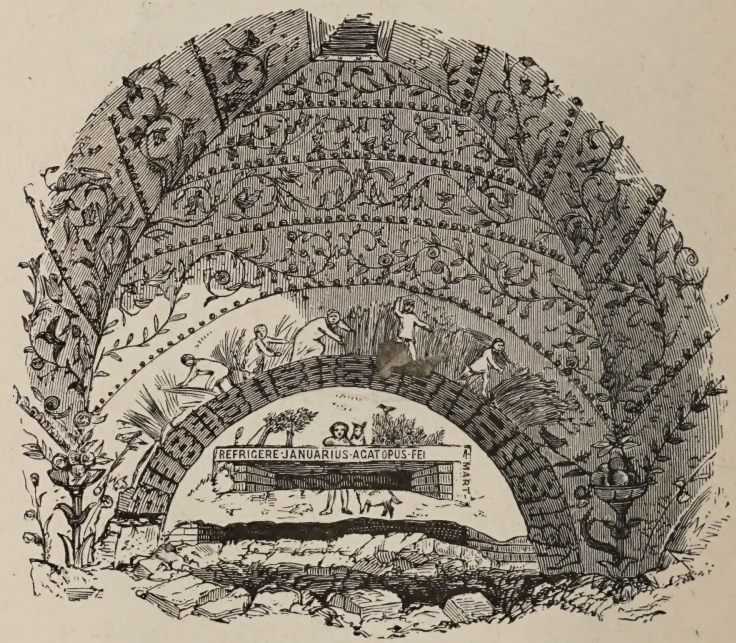


FIG. 12.—*Painting on Vault of Arched Recess in Cemetery of Prætextatus.*

life and action to the scene. On the side of the chapel containing an arched recess for a sarcophagus as shown in our woodcut, reapers are gathering in the corn; on the other three sides are children picking roses, men gathering grapes and bringing them to a vat in which two men are treading them out, and men gathering olives. Of course these scenes represent severally the four seasons; but we cannot doubt that

[1] Storia dell' Arte Cristiana, tom. ii. p. 43.

they are used here to signify more than mere marks of the flight of time, since, as Tertullian says,[1] "the whole revolving order of the seasons was looked upon by Christians as a perpetual witness to the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead."

FIGS. 13, 14, 15.—*Lowest Border of Ornament on three sides of a Chamber in Cemetery of Prætextatus.*

Lower still, and at the back of the arched recess, is a rural scene, of which the central figure is the Good Shepherd carrying a sheep upon His shoulders. This, however, has been destroyed by graves pierced through the wall and the rock behind it, from that eager desire, of which we shall have occa-

[1] De Resurrect. Carn., c. xii.

sion to speak elsewhere, to bury the dead of a later generation as near as possible to the tombs of the martyrs. As De Rossi proceeded to examine these graves in detail, he could hardly believe his eyes when he read around the edge of one of them these words and fragments of words :—. . . *mi Refrigeri Januarius Agatopus Felicissim..martyres* — "Januarius, Agapetus, Felicissimus, martyrs, refresh the soul of . . ." The words had been scratched upon the mortar whilst yet it was fresh, fifteen centuries ago, as the prayer of some bereaved relative for the soul of him whom he was burying here, and now they revealed to the antiquarian of the nineteenth century the secret he was in quest of—viz., the place of burial of the saints whose aid is here invoked ; for the numerous examples to be seen in other cemeteries warrant us in concluding that the bodies of the saints, to whose intercession the soul of the deceased is here recommended, were at the time of his burial lying at no great distance, and the reader will have observed that they are three of the very martyrs whose relics are known to have once rendered famous the Cemetery of Prætextatus.

De Rossi, therefore, really needed no further evidence in corroboration of the topographical outline which he had sketched five years before to the Roman archæologists ; yet further evidence was in store for him, though it did not come to light until six years later, when the Commission of Sacred Archæology were persuaded to take this cemetery as the special scene of their labours. Then, amid the soil which encumbered the entrance to this crypt, three or four fragments were discovered of a large marble slab, marked by a few letters of the form peculiar to the inscriptions of Pope Damasus, but of unusual size. More fragments [1] have been discovered since,

Damasine inscription.

[1] Only those letters, or parts of letters, which are in darker tints have been found ; but in inscriptions executed with such mathematical precision as these, they are quite enough to enable us to restore the whole. In fact, those who will compare this engraving with that which appeared in the first edition of this work will see that De Rossi's restoration was made on less than half the evidence which has now been discovered.

so that we are able to say with certainty that the whole inscription once stood thus :—

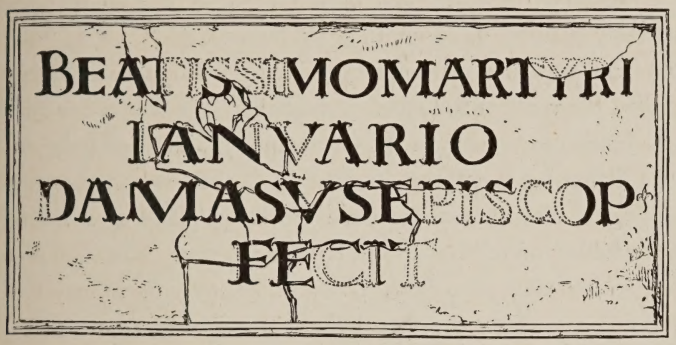


FIG. 16.—*The Inscription to Januarius by Pope Damasus.*

The excavations of the Commission revealed the existence of another crypt on the opposite side of the gallery, which is still older than that of St. Januarius; so that, whereas the martyrdom of St. Januarius belongs to the year A.D. 162, De Rossi was not afraid to identify this second crypt as the probable burial-place of St. Quirinus, somewhere about A.D. 130. He considers that the excellence of the brickwork at this tomb is quite worthy of the days of Hadrian. A sarcophagus, large fragments of which were found here, may perhaps once have contained the remains of the martyr. He says it is the most ancient he ever found in the Catacombs, simple and architectural in its style, with no Christian sculpture about it; and it must have been used for the burial of some person of senatorial rank, as the bust which occupies the centre of the front represents a personage wearing the *laticlavus*, which is a privilege that Quirinus may very probably have enjoyed.

St. Quirinus, A.D. 130.

Another monument discovered in 1870 in the same gallery was evidently once a centre of great attraction. The *arcosolium* or principal tomb was faced with marble, and opposite to it was a semicircular apse of most unusual form, designed for the accommodation of numerous worshippers or visitors.

Another monument of importance.

The ground was strewed with fragments of two columns of porphyry which had once stood on either side of the *arcosolium*, the opening of which was itself closed by a slab of costly marble, pierced as a grating or lattice-work.[1] Two other columns of white alabaster ornamented the entrance or supported the vault of the apse. Altogether, it is one of the finest sanctuaries to be seen in the Catacombs; and four fragments of a Damasine inscription, consisting of the letters VS MARTYS, suffice to show that it was once the burial-place of a martyr, but whether of more than one we cannot say. The complete inscription may have been *Urbanus Martys*, or it may have been

FELICISSIMUS MARTYS
AGAPITUS MARTYS

like one found by Bosio[2] in a cemetery on the Via Latina, where two names were arranged one above the other in this way. De Rossi leaves this in doubt; but one of his pupils, finding in the same neighbourhood a fragment of the *mensa* of an *arcosolium*, having on it a *graffito* of the names of Felicissimus and Agapitus, together with several other names which are probably the names of priests who had once celebrated the holy mysteries upon it, has pronounced with certainty that we have here the tomb of the two martyred deacons of Sixtus.[3]

It has been already mentioned that there were four historical monuments of importance in this Catacomb, and the most trustworthy of our ancient guides puts them in the following order:—He says, "You will enter into a great cave, and there you will find St. Urban, bishop and confessor; and in a second place, Felicissimus and Agapitus, martyrs and deacons of Sixtus; and in a third place, Cyrinus, martyr; and in a fourth, Januarius, martyr." We have certainly discovered the *spelunca*

[1] This may be seen in the foreground of Plate I.

[2] Roma Sotterranea, p. 299.

[3] Scoperta d'un graffito storico nel cimitero di Pretestato. Memoria di Mariano Armellini. Roma, 1874.

magna, and in it we have found four important monuments. Two of these were certainly the resting-places of Januarius (A) and of Cyrinus (D). If we are to credit our guide with perfect accuracy as to the order as well as the substance of his statements, we ought to look for the other two—the tombs of the bishop and the deacons—farther forward in this same gallery, in the direction of G *g*. Instead of that, one is on one side, the other on the other. There is an important monument at F, in the right direction, which is not yet disinterred; and there is the very magnificent monument which we have been describing at C. Doubtless, more extensive excavations would soon dissipate our doubts, and enable us to appropriate both these monuments to their proper subjects; but there are two grave obstacles in the way—one is the lack of funds, the other the resolute opposition of the owner of the land under which these precious memorials lie. Notwith-

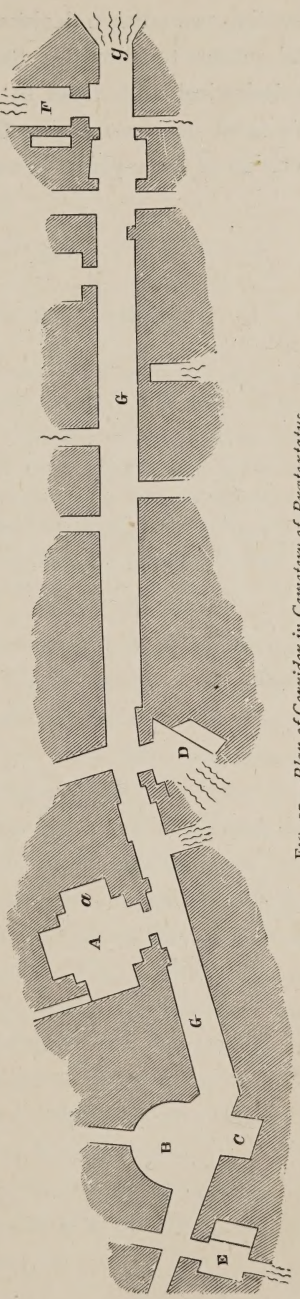


FIG. 17.—*Plan of Corridor in Cemetery of Prætextatus.*

standing two adverse decisions in the Italian courts of law, he still refuses to allow De Rossi or anybody else sent by the ecclesiastical authorities to have access to the monuments. We must be content, therefore, for the present, to leave the decision of these points in uncertainty.

CHAPTER III.

THE CATACOMBS IN THE THIRD CENTURY.

Christian Cemetery on Appian Way belonging to the Church from beginning of third century; administered by first Deacon of the Pope—Fabian built many small Basilicas in the Cemeteries, A.D. 240—*First edict against the Catacombs,* A.D. 257—*Martyrdom of St. Sixtus II. and his Deacons; of St. Tharsycius—Material changes in the Catacombs to render them more difficult of access—Martyrdom of a whole congregation—Legislation of later Popes in third century about the Cemeteries—Probable history of their administration at that time.*

WITH the opening of the third century, fresh light dawns upon our knowledge of the Catacombs. We begin to read about them in books, and are not forced laboriously to compile their history from a study of their own monuments. They had not been designedly concealed before this time; but we do not read anything about them in contemporary authors, because they were not interfered with. But in the year 202 there was a popular outcry and display of violence against the Christian cemeteries in Africa; and just about the same time we read that in Rome Pope Zephyrinus "intrusted his deacon Callixtus with the government of the clergy, and set him over the cemetery."[1] What is the meaning of this announcement? Long before this there had been many Christian cemeteries all round the city. What then was, *par excellence*, THE cemetery? and in what way was it distinguished from the rest?

Cemetery on Via Appia belonging to the Church since A.D. 200;

There can be no hesitation as to the answer to be given to the first of these questions, whatever may be thought about the

[1] Philosophumena, ix. 7.

second. The ancient Martyrologies make more frequent mention of the Cemetery of Callixtus on the Via Appia than of any other. The "Liber Pontificalis" says that "Callixtus made it; that many bishops and martyrs rest there; and that it is called by his name even to the present day;" and now we learn from the author of the "Philosophumena" that he was set over it by Pope Zephyrinus. It is only necessary, therefore, that we should identify the cemetery which was called by his name; and this we shall do in a future chapter with the most absolute certainty, under the guidance of De Rossi.

But how was it distinguished from the other cemeteries? Here we must call to mind what was said in a former chapter about the Roman laws as to *collegia* for purposes of burial, and, in particular, how Septimius Severus in the beginning of the third century encouraged them, confirming and extending their rights and privileges throughout the whole empire. One of these rights was that they could hold common property and have a common treasury; but the law required that they should also have an agent or syndic, by whom all business should be transacted that concerned the whole body.[1] Who could this be in the Christian Church but one of the deacons? That order had been originally instituted for the express purpose of attending to the temporal ministrations of the Church, and amongst these the burial of the poor had always held a very important place. Tertullian, writing at the very time of which we are speaking, draws the following picture of the Christian society, for the instruction of their heathen rulers and neighbours:—"There preside over us," he says, "certain approved elders, men who have attained that honour, not by purchase, but by the good testimony of others. . . . And if there be any kind of treasury (*arca*) among us, it is made up,

administered by first deacon of the Pope

[1] "Quibus permissum est corpus habere collegii, societatis, sive cujusque alterius eorum nomine, proprium est . . . habere res communes, arcam communem, et actorem sive syndicum, per quem, quod communiter agi fierique oporteat, agatur, fiat."—*Digest.*, iii. 4. 1, s. 1.

not of fees paid by these presidents or others on their appointment,[1] as if religion were bought and sold among us, but each person contributes a small sum once a month, or whenever he likes, and *if* he likes, and has the means. . . . All these contributions are, as it were, pious deposits; for they are spent, not on feasting, but on feeding the hungry, on burying the poor, on orphans, old men confined to their houses, and shipwrecked persons; and if any are condemned to the mines, or exiled, or in prison, provided only that it be on account of God's sect, these also become the foster-children of their confession,"—*i.e.*, provided they suffer these punishments for the profession of Christianity, they are supported by the Church.[2]

This account of the use to which the common treasure of the Church was put might be confirmed by many other witnesses. Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, writes to Soter, Bishop of Rome, A.D. 163, to thank him for the alms he had sent to the relief of those who were condemned to work in the mines and quarries of Greece. Another Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, renders the same testimony to the charity of the Roman Church towards the exiles in Syria and Arabia about the beginning of the third century. The letter of Pope Cornelius about the middle of the same century reckons more than 1500 widows and other poor persons who were maintained in Rome in his day at the expense of the Church. But he adds what Tertullian—probably not without design—altogether omitted, viz., that the clergy also received their maintenance from the same common chest; and he enumerates as belonging to

[1] This has now been clearly ascertained, from ancient inscriptions found in Africa and elsewhere, to be the true meaning of Tertullian's words, *de honoraria summa*, which have been the cause of so much perplexity to earlier commentators. Bullett., 1866, 11. The very words themselves occur in these inscriptions. O. H., 2548, 7060; see also Pliny, Ep. x. 114. In Africa from 2000 to 10,000 sesterces (£16 to £80) was paid, according to the dignity of the municipium. Boissier, La Religion Romaine, &c., tom. i. p. 180. To be elected gratuitously was thought worthy of being recorded on the tomb. O. H., 3931, 4047.

[2] Apolog., c. 39.

Rome 46 priests, 7 deacons, 42 acolytes, exorcists, and lectors, and 62 *ostiarii*. Now, it was the deacon who kept the register (*matricula*) of the numbers and offices of the clerics, and who made the distribution of these abundant alms. And by and by, in obedience to that law whereby the moral and the material life of any society are so intimately linked together, that he who provides for the one is sure to gain a powerful influence over the other, the first deacon grew into an archdeacon; that is to say, he became, in some sense, the guardian and judge of the other clergy, and his authority was inferior to none, save only the bishop. Hence it came to be almost a law in Rome, that on the death of the Pope, not a priest, but the first deacon, succeeded to the vacant see; and to promote this deacon to the priesthood was sometimes resented, because it seemed to shut the door against his attainment of the highest rank in the hierarchy.

throughout the whole of that century.

But to return to our ancient author, and his statement that Pope Zephyrinus set his deacon Callixtus over the cemetery. We gather from this, that, whatever may have been the case before this time, certainly at the beginning of the third century there was a cemetery on the Via Appia, which was no private property of this or that individual or noble family, but belonged to the whole body corporate of the Christian community in Rome, and was held for them by the bishop, who appointed his first deacon to administer it in their behalf. From this time forward, therefore, this cemetery became the regular burial-place of the Roman bishops, thirteen (or, more probably, fifteen) out of the eighteen who succeeded one another from Zephyrinus to Sylvester having been buried in it; and an interesting monument still remains in the cemetery itself, showing that it continued to be administered by the Pope's deacon up to the end of this period. Our readers may see a facsimile of the monument in our Plate IX.: here we need only quote its opening lines:—

CUBICULUM DUPLEX CUM ARCISOLIIS ET LUMINARE
JUSSU PP. SUI MARCELLINI DIACONUS ISTE
SEVERUS FECIT MANSIONEM IN PACE QUIETAM
SIBI SUISQUE.

"The Deacon Severus made this double chamber, with its *arcosolia* and *luminare*, as a quiet resting-place in death for himself and his relatives, by the permission of his Pope Marcellinus" (A.D. 296–308).

Probably the administration of the other cemeteries was intrusted to the other deacons; for another written testimony we have about them is that Fabian, who was Pope from A.D. 236 to 250, "divided the regions among the deacons, and caused many buildings to be made throughout the cemeteries;"[1] and when the cemeteries and other ecclesiastical property were finally restored to the Church, A.D. 311, we read of the deacons Strato and Cassius having been sent by Pope Melchiades to take possession of them.[2]

Fabian built many small Basilicas in the Cemeteries, A.D. 240.

We shall have occasion to return by and by to the statement about Fabian's distribution of the regions among the deacons. At present, let us fix our attention on the other part of the statement as to his erection of buildings in the cemeteries. The language in which this is asserted—*multas fabricas fieri fecit per cœmeteria*—will not allow us to understand it of mere works of repair or substructions under ground, but rather of complete buildings, public and above ground. And the circumstances of the time are quite consistent with such an interpretation; for ecclesiastical history sets before us the forty years from the death of Septimius Severus to the accession of Decius as having been on the whole a period of peace for the Church, uninterrupted save by very partial outbreaks and the short persecution of Maximin. The fifteen years of Fabian's pontificate form the concluding portion of this period.

[1] The present edition of the "Liber Pontificalis" separates these two clauses by a notice about the institution of sub-deacons, but De Rossi insists on the authenticity of the text as given above. R. S., i. 199.

[2] St. Aug. Brev. Coll. cum Donat., iii. 34–36.

During this time the sympathy of the Philips with Christianity is well known. It is known also that even at an earlier period the Christians had public churches within the city of Rome, and that in Africa they assembled in *cellæ* within the limits of their *areæ sepulturarum.* We understand, then, from the statement of Fabian's contemporary biographer, that that Pontiff provided similar places of assembly in the cemeteries of Rome —*i.e.*, in the fields or gardens under which the Catacombs were excavated, or at least in as many of these as had by this time passed out of private hands and become the public property of the whole Roman Church; and on a future occasion we hope to introduce our readers to more than one of these buildings, or at least to the remains of them, still to be recognised.

First edict against the Catacombs, A.D. 257.

In January A.D. 250, St. Fabian fell a victim to the persecution of Decius. And a few years later, A.D. 257, there was published the first imperial edict that we know of which interfered with the liberty of Christians in their use of the Catacombs. The edict itself has not been preserved, but from the language of two contemporary authors [1] we can almost restore its very words. It distinctly forbade "all Christian assemblies and all visits to the places called cemeteries," and threatened the severest punishment upon any who should disobey. It was, of course, impossible that the Christians should acquiesce in this prohibition; and Pope Sixtus II., A.D. 258, soon paid the penalty of his disobedience. He had assembled the faithful, not in the Cemetery of Callixtus, which was probably avoided as being the principal cemetery, and too well known to the authorities, but in another on the opposite side of the road, called by the name of its owner, Prætextatus. And here, whilst surrounded by his flock, he was surprised by the Pagan soldiery, hurried before the tribunal of justice, which was at no great distance, and then—as if to give a new sanction to the imperial rescript which had been so flagrantly violated—

Martyrdom of St. Sixtus II.

[1] Euseb. H. E., vii. 11; Acta Proconsul. S. Cypriani.

brought back to the scene of his crime and there beheaded. We are familiar with the pathetic remonstrances of one of his deacons, St. Laurence, who happened not to be assisting the Pope in the celebration of the holy mysteries on this occasion, and therefore did not suffer martyrdom till a fortnight later; but four deacons who had been assisting him were apprehended, and put to death together with their master, and we have already seen an interesting memorial of two of them in the Catacomb of Prætextatus, where they were buried. St. Sixtus himself was buried in the crypt with his predecessors within the Cemetery of Callixtus; and at a later period, Pope Damasus set up there an inscription in his honour, which we will insert in this place though out of its proper chronological order, for the sake of the interesting details which it has preserved to us :— and his deacons.

TEMPORE QUO GLADIUS SECUIT PIA VISCERA MATRIS
HIC POSITUS RECTOR CÆLESTIA JUSSA DOCEBAM ;
ADVENIUNT SUBITO, RAPIUNT QUI FORTE SEDENTEM ;
MILITIBUS MISSIS, POPULI TUNC COLLA DEDERE.
MOX SIBI COGNOVIT SENIOR QUIS TOLLERE VELLET
PALMAM SEQUE SUUMQUE CAPUT PRIOR OBTULIT IPSE,
IMPATIENS FERITAS POSSET NE L*ÆDE*RE QUEMQUAM.
OSTENDIT CHRISTUS REDDIT QUI *PRÆ*MIA VITÆ
PASTORIS MERITUM, NUMERUM G*RÆG*IS IPSE TUETUR.[1]

"At a time when the sword [of persecution] pierced the tender heart of Mother [Church], I, the Pope buried here, was teaching the laws of heaven. On a sudden came [the enemy] and seized me seated as I happened to be in my chair; the soldiers were sent in; then did the people give their necks [to the slaughter]. The old man saw at once who wished to bear away the palm from him, and he was forward to offer himself and his own head, that the impatient rage [of the Pagans] might injure no one else. Christ, who renders [to the just] the rewards of life [eternal], manifests the merit of the pastor: He Himself defends the mass of the flock."

This inscription alludes to circumstances of the incident it records which were doubtless familiar to those for whom it was written, but have since been lost sight of. We seem, Of St. Cyprian.

[1] The few letters which are printed in italics may still be seen *in situ* in the Papal Crypt.

however, to see the repetition or the reflection of them in the contemporaneous Acts of the Martyrdom of St. Cyprian. The news of the Pope's martyrdom, which took place on the 6th of August, soon reached St. Cyprian in Africa. It was brought by his own special messengers, whom he had sent to Rome to learn the true state of things about the persecution; and on receipt of the intelligence he both prepared himself, and bade his brethren prepare, "not for death," he says, "but for immortality; standing firm with the firmness of faith for the endurance of suffering, and expecting with the help and from the goodness of God a crown of everlasting life."[1] He had not long to wait. The imperial letters to the presidents of the provinces, which had not arrived when he wrote, but which, he says, were daily expected, must have come a very few days later; for on the 15th September he too received his reward. His biographer (who was also his deacon) tells us that he had expressed a hope that he might receive the martyr's crown whilst speaking about God in the discharge of his duty, *in ipso sermonis opere, dum de Deo loquitur.* One cannot help suspecting that this hope was inspired by what he had heard of St. Sixtus, though, indeed, considering the terms of the imperial rescript and the impossibility of obeying it, it was not an unlikely end for all bishops to look forward to. Nay, even the faithful laity exposed themselves to the danger of death by frequenting the public assemblies in the cemeteries if they persevered in their Christian profession after their apprehension; and it is probably for this reason that, both in the Acts of St. Cyprian and in the panegyric of St. Sixtus, we find that many of the brethren who were present sought to share at once in the glory of their pastor's martyrdom. It would seem, however, from the last words of Pope Damasus' inscription, that this was not allowed; the clergy alone were punished at the time; and if any of the laity suffered afterwards, no record of their martyrdom has reached us, declaring

[1] Ep. 82, aliter 80.

as precisely as it is declared about Sixtus, that he suffered "because he had set at nought the commands of Valerian."

Of St. Tharsycius.

One martyr there is among the lower ranks of the clergy whose name may not be omitted in this place, both because it probably belongs to this period, and because it incidentally reveals so much that is interesting about the secret history of the Catacombs. It is to Pope Damasus that we are again indebted for the most authentic narrative of the incident, though of course it is to be read also at greater length elsewhere. Damasus set up in the Cemetery of Callixtus a joint memorial in honour of the deacon and protomartyr St. Stephen and of Tharsycius, whose place in the hierarchy he does not specify, but he puts his merits on an equality with those of St. Stephen. From the nature of his employment we should have judged that he, too, was a deacon; the Martyrologies, however, call him an acolyte.

TARSICIUM SANCTUM CHRISTI SACRAMENTA GERENTEM
CUM MALE SANA MANUS PREMERET VULGARE PROFANIS
ILLA VOLENS, NOSTRISQUE INHIANS ILLUDERE SACRIS,
IPSE ANIMAM POTIUS VOLUIT DIMITTERE CÆSUS
PRODERE QUAM CANIBUS RABIDIS CŒLESTIA MEMBRA.

"Whilst the holy Tharsycius was carrying the Sacraments of Christ, and an impious band pressed upon him, anxious to expose them to the profane gaze (and to mock at our sacred things),[1] he chose rather to give up his life and be killed than to betray the heavenly limbs to mad dogs."

Catacombs restored A.D. 260.

In A.D. 260, Gallienus revoked his father's edict, and sent another rescript through the empire, by virtue of which the possessors of *loca religiosa* belonging to the Christians, but which had been confiscated by Valerian, were to make restitution to the bishops of each church. And besides this general order, he directed rescripts to other bishops, by which they

[1] The third line of the inscription is a purely conjectural emendation by De Rossi, who shows that the word in the preceding line, usually printed *peteret*, must be *premeret* (in the MS. it is *pericret*), and then considers some other line to be necessary to complete the sense.

were to recover the free use of "what are called the cemeteries."[1] De Rossi gathers from this necessity for a double rescript that there had probably been a twofold mode of dealing with the Christian property. Perhaps their places of assembly which had been built publicly had been confiscated and sold for the benefit of the imperial exchequer; but the cemeteries, protected by the ordinary laws and usages of the nation, had only been closed and their use forbidden.

Secret entrances made to the Catacombs, and other changes in the interior.

Even this prohibition, however, had been practically evaded, else how could Pope Sixtus have been buried in the Cemetery of Callixtus, and his deacons, Felicissimus and Agapitus, in that of Prætextatus? Some have thought that burial in the Catacombs was not forbidden by the edict of Valerian, but only the holding of assemblies there (*coitiones* or *conventus*); and certainly the funeral of St. Cyprian in Carthage at this very time was public enough. Judging, however, from what we see in the Roman Catacombs themselves, we should be inclined to the stricter and more severe interpretation of the law. For there are features in the construction of certain parts of them which belong to this period, and seem manifestly due to this cause. Instead of public porticoes and staircases descending boldly from the highway-side, communications are now opened with the interior of extensive *sandpits;* the paths by which this is effected are not direct and straight, but long, irregular, and circuitous. Where there is more than one such communication, they are made independently of each other, and even walls are built expressly to keep them separate, so that if the enemy should gain admission by the one, the hunted victims might still effect their escape by the other. A staircase is made which seems to promise easy access to the cemetery, but it is not continued to the bottom; it only reaches to the roof of the subterranean galleries, not to the floor, so that, whilst full of peril to a stranger who should attempt to use it, it might still do good service to those who were in the secret.

[1] Euseb. H. E., vii. 13.

The old staircases are in some instances cut off; elsewhere old galleries are blocked up with earth; in a word, recourse is had to many and ingenious devices, whereby the curiosity and malice of the Pagans may be baffled.

Martyrdom of a whole congregation visiting the martyrs' tombs.

It was, of course, impossible that these efforts should be always successful, and we cannot doubt that the Catacombs were the scene of many surprises and the occasion of many martyrdoms. One at least was sufficiently important to deserve special attention. Chrysanthus and Daria had been surprised and blocked up in an *arenarium* between the Cemeteries of Thraso and the Jordani on the Via Salaria Nova, and on

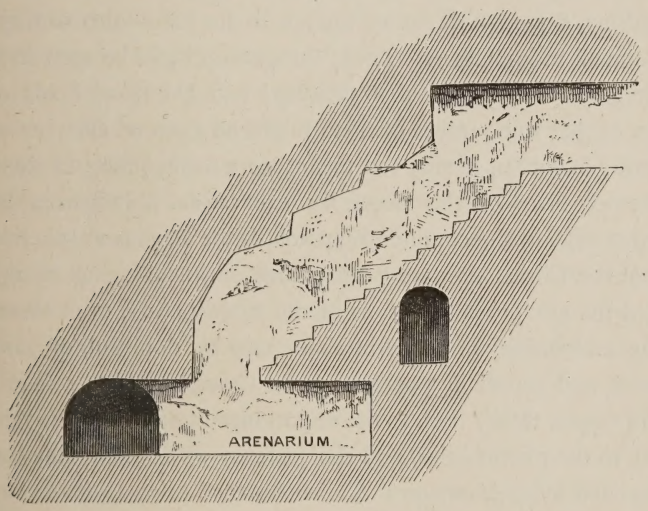


FIG. 18.—*Section of Secret Staircase into Arenarium.*

one occasion, when a great number of the faithful had been seen entering the subterranean crypt to visit their tombs, the entrance was hastily built up, and a vast mound of sand and stones heaped in front of it, so that they might be all buried alive, even as the martyrs whom they had come to venerate. St. Gregory of Tours[1] tells us that when the tombs of these martyrs were rediscovered, after the ages of persecution had ceased, there were found with them, not only the relics of those

[1] De Gloria Martyrum, i. 28.

worshippers who had been thus cruelly put to death, skeletons of men, women, and children lying on the floor, but also the silver cruets (*urcei argentei*) which they had taken down with them for the celebration of the sacred mysteries. So touching a memorial of past ages was sure not to be overlooked by Pope Damasus. He sought for it and recovered it, and as the whole spot was in a manner consecrated by so large a sacrifice, he abstained from making any of those changes by which he usually decorated the martyrs' tombs, but contented himself with setting up an historical inscription, and opening a window in the adjacent wall or rock, that all might see, without disturbing, this monument so unique in its kind—this Christian Pompeii in miniature. These things might still be seen in St. Gregory's time, in the sixth century; and De Rossi holds out hopes that some traces of them might be restored even to our own generation, if only the means were forthcoming to defray the expenses of the necessary excavation. Instances like these explain the common reproach of the Pagans at this time, that the Christians were "a skulking, darkness-loving race;"[1] and the numerous traditions of the same period, even though the authenticity of some of them may be doubtful, of Christians, and especially popes—*e.g.*, St. Caius,[2]—taking refuge in the crypts, testify both to the importance attached by the faithful to their cemeteries, and the jealousy with which they were watched by their enemies.

Catacombs used as hiding-places.

Catacombs again confiscated, A.D. 303.

The Church continued to be exposed to the same trials even for a short period of the fourth century; indeed, the last trial was the sharpest of all. The storm of the tenth persecution, under Diocletian, burst upon the Church with frightful violence in the second half of the year 303. The churches which had been erected during the peace were burned or otherwise demolished; the farms or gardens under which the cemeteries lay

[1] "Latebrosa et lucifugax natio."—*Minuc. Felix.*

[2] "Caius . . . fugiens persecutionem Diocletiani in cryptis habitando, martyrio coronatur."—*Lib. Pont.*

were confiscated, and the archives of the Church pillaged and destroyed. Still, even under such circumstances as these, the Christians sometimes contrived to effect an entrance into the Catacombs and to bury there. This is attested by an occasional dated inscription, even in the Cemetery of St. Callixtus, which would probably have been a special object of Pagan surveillance, and burial in it proportionately difficult. We easily understand, therefore, why the Popes Marcellinus and Marcellus were not buried there. It is recorded of the one that he was laid to his rest in "a *cubiculum* which he himself had prepared in the Cemetery of Priscilla;" and of the other, that "he asked leave of a matron named Priscilla, and made a cemetery on the Via Salaria."[1] In the light of the previous part of this history, it is not difficult to interpret these statements. We have seen that there had been a Christian cemetery here belonging to the family of Pudens from apostolic times; and this family was still represented by a lady bearing the same name as her distinguished ancestress. From her Marcellus, being probably the deacon of Pope Marcellinus, obtained leave, under the pressing necessities of the time, to make provision in her cemetery for the general sepulture of the faithful; and the cemetery so made might with equal propriety be attributed to the Pope or to his deacon. Both were buried there; and in fact it is still possible to recognise the portion of the cemetery which they made. It is in the lowest level, very extensive, and executed with a degree of regularity to which it

R.S., iii. 225.

The Popes, therefore, not buried in the Papal Crypt.

[1] At a Conference of the *Società di Cultori della Cristiana Archeologia* held in Rome, March 26, 1876, the Abbé Duchesne stated that, in two manuscripts of the "Liber Pontificalis," he found an important variation from the ordinary text of the Life of Pope Marcellus. Instead of *Hic fecit cymiterium via Salaria*, one MS. reads, *Hic fecit cymiterium Noille via Salaria*, and the other, *cymiterium nobile*. This *cymiterium Noille* would seem to be the *cœmeterium Novellæ;* and it is worthy of notice that the Cemetery of Novella does not, in fact, contain any tombs which can be attributed to a more ancient date than that of Pope Marcellus. De Rossi has not pronounced any opinion on this new conjecture, but it is reported in the Bullettino, (1877, pp. 67, 68), and we record it here.

would be difficult to find a parallel in any other part of the Catacombs.

Legislation of the Popes affecting the Catacombs.

Another fact which is recorded of Pope Marcellus is still more interesting and important. We read that he "constituted twenty-five *tituli* in the city of Rome as parishes (*diœceses*) for the reception by baptism and penance of the multitudes who were converted from among the Pagans, and for the burial of the martyrs." Now, we know that *titles* or parishes in Rome were of much older date than the time of Marcellus: indeed, almost the very same thing is recorded of Dionysius, the successor of Pope Sixtus II., fifty years earlier. We read that he too divided the churches and cemeteries among the priests, and constituted parishes and dioceses. And as long ago as the very beginning of the second century, it is said that Evaristus, the sixth from St. Peter, "divided the *titles* among the priests, and appointed seven deacons." We have seen Fabian, too, about a century and a half later, "dividing the fourteen regions of Rome among the deacons." By dint of a most careful study of every fragment of topography that can be found on ancient Christian monuments or in ancient Christian writers, De Rossi has been able to show how the fourteen civil divisions of Rome were distributed among the seven ecclesiastical divisions, and he has ascertained, too, that the places of burial of the laity corresponded (in almost all instances in which it is possible to institute a comparison) to the ecclesiastical division in which they had lived: indeed, we have seen that one of the objects contemplated in this arrangement was the burial of the dead.

Titles, or parish churches,

had each their own cemetery.

There is reason to believe that, at least from the time of Fabian, each *title* within the city had its corresponding cemetery or cemeteries outside the walls, and the priest or priests of the *title* had jurisdiction over these cemeteries. Two priests were attached to each *title*, the one acting in subordination to the other;[1] probably one ministered in the *fabrica*,

[1] "Felix qui presbyterium subministrabat sub Decimo."—*St. Cyprian*, Ep. xviii. "Nunc autem septem diaconos esse oportet et aliquantos pres-

cella, or *basilica*[1] of the cemetery, whilst the other ministered in the city. Hence, in an inscription in the Cemetery of Domitilla, belonging probably to the fourth century, we find the names of two priests—not one only—as having given leave for the appropriation of two graves, or of a *bisomus :*

ALEXIUS ET CAPRIOLA FECERUNT SE VIVI
JUSSU ARCHELAI ET DULCITI PRESBB.

"Alexius and Capriola made this during their lifetime, with the leave of Archelaus and Dulcitus, priests."

Reflections on this portion of the history of the Catacombs.

It would be easy to pursue this subject still farther, and to show, from a multitude of testimonies belonging to the fifth and sixth centuries, that each suburban cemetery was in those days dependent on some particular parish within the walls. But about this there can be no dispute. It is only when we seek to penetrate the thick darkness which envelops the history of the earlier ages that it is difficult to find clear and decisive proofs; and the precise province of an archæologist is to supply these deficiencies, not out of his own imagination, but by acute and cautious induction, based on a most careful examination of every fragment that remains. If we set before a skilful professor of comparative anatomy a few bones dug out of the bowels of the earth, he will reconstruct the whole form of the animal to which they belonged; and it often happens that these theoretical constructions are singularly justified by later discoveries. The work of an archæologist is much of the same kind. An historian only rearranges, transcribes, or interprets annals already composed and transmitted by his predecessors. He may have to gather his materials from various sources; must be able to distinguish the true from the false, and give form, consistency, and life to the whole; but, for the

R.S., i. 204–210.

byteros, ut bini sint per ecclesias."—*Ambros.* [Hilar.] in 1 Tim. iii. In the sixth century the assistant priests were called *socii*. Bullett., 1870, 143, tav. x. xi.

[1] This name seems to have been in occasional use from the days of Diocletian. R. S., i. 205.

most part, at least, he has little to supply that is new from his own resources. An archæologist, on the contrary, if he be really a man of learning and science, and not a mere collector of old curiosities, aims at discovering and restoring annals that are lost by means of a careful and intelligent use of every fragment, often of heterogeneous materials, that the most unwearied diligence has been able to bring together.

This remark seems not uncalled for at the end of a series of chapters in which we have professed to set before our readers a continuous history of the subterranean cemeteries of Rome during the ages of persecution, and even to unfold the system of their ecclesiastical administration. Such a history has never been written before, and some readers may be disposed to think that even now the materials for it are too scanty. De Rossi frankly acknowledges that each fact that he has been able to collect, if taken alone, throws but a faint and uncertain light upon the obscurity of the subject; but he justly argues that the wonderful harmony which he has been able to establish between facts and documents, so unlike one another, and separated so far asunder both in point of time and place, is a very strong presumption of truth. The Lives of the Popes, compiled partly in the sixth, partly in the seventh and eighth centuries; the "Philosophumena," written in a spirit of bitter personal hatred against a Pope of the third century, and only brought to light in the nineteenth; sepulchral inscriptions also, of the third century, in like manner unknown before our own time; ecclesiastical historians and learned commentators of different times and countries;—each of these has been made by De Rossi to contribute its quota to this chapter of history as it stands in his own voluminous work; and even in this imperfect abridgment of it the reader will have been struck with the number and variety of fragments out of which so complete a skeleton, if we may not rather say so full and lifelike a body, has been composed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CATACOMBS IN THE FOURTH CENTURY.

Catacombs restored A.D. 311—*Changes to make them more easy of access—Other Cemeteries made in open air—Burial of Popes still outside the Papal Crypt—Pope Liberius extends the Cemetery of St. Callixtus—Catacombs much frequented—Testimony of St. Jerome and Prudentius—Damage done by indiscreet devotion and desire to be buried near the Martyrs.*

AT the close of the year 306, Maxentius put an end to the persecution of the Church; but her property was not restored until the pontificate of Melchiades, A.D. 311. St. Augustine tells us that the Donatists "recited the Acts in which it was read how Melchiades sent deacons with the letters of the Emperor Maxentius and the letters of the Prefect of the Prætorium to the Prefect of the city, that they might receive the property which the aforesaid Emperor had commanded to be restored to the Christians, as having been taken from them in time of persecution. . . . The Donatists said that the deacon Strato, whom Melchiades had sent with the rest to receive the *loca ecclesiastica*, was declared in the above Acts to be a *traditor*, and . . . the Donatists also calumniated Melchiades on account of Cassian, because this name is found also among the deacons whom Melchiades sent to the Prefect," &c.[1] Catacombs restored A.D. 311.

We may gather from this narrative a clear indication that the same method of administration had been retained for the Catacombs through all the persecutions to the end. They were

[1] St. Aug. Brev. Coll. cum Donat., iii. 34–36.

the property of the whole Christian body, and the deacons were the recognised officials through whom all matters of business regarding them were transacted.

Consequent changes in their construction.

From this day a new era opens in the history of the Catacombs, which has left many and clear traces of itself in their internal construction and development. There was no longer the same urgent necessity for secrecy or for economy; galleries were made of greater width, chambers of greater variety of form; more frequent shafts, too, communicating with the open air, but not so much, it would seem, for the sake of giving light and ventilation to the vaults beneath, as for greater facility in extracting the soil. The work of excavation was no longer carefully confined within the limits of the area which had been legally secured to the Christians; and—a far more important change than any of these—other cemeteries were made, not subterranean, but in the superficial soil; and these gradually diminished, and at last superseded, the use of the Catacombs as the common burial-places of all Roman Christians.

R.S., ii. *Anal. Geol.*, pp. 5, 6.

Damasus seeks for the tombs of the martyrs.

Of course, also, as soon as peace was secured to the Church, the Christians set to work to remove the obstacles with which in time of persecution they had blocked the approach to the more famous crypts of the martyrs. But this was not a work that could be completed at once, and it is clear that in some of the closed passages it was not even attempted; for we find new galleries excavated about this time at such a height and in such a position as could only have been possible if the lowest and older galleries were still full of earth. Moreover, it is recorded of St. Damasus, who was not Pope till nearly fifty years later, that "he sought for and found many bodies of the martyrs," showing that the tombs of some of them at least had been so long inaccessible that even the tradition of their precise locality had been lost. He himself testifies, with reference to the sepulchres of SS. Protus and Hyacinth, that they had been buried in darkness under heaps of earth until he brought them forth to light:

SANCTORUM MONUMENTA VIDES PATEFACTA SEPULCHRIS.
MARTYRIS HIC PROTI TUMULUS JACET ATQUE HYACINTHI;
QUEM CUM JAMDUDUM TEGERET MONS, TERRA, CALIGO, ETC.

"You see the monuments of the Saints which have been laid open in their sepulchres. Here lies the tomb of the martyr Protus and of Hyacinth; and, whereas a heap of earth and darkness was concealing them," &c.

He expresses something of the same kind in several other of the metrical inscriptions with which he adorned these sacred shrines.[1]

Popes of the fourth century not buried in St. Callixtus.

Perhaps it was for this reason that the Popes of this century were not buried with their predecessors in the Papal Crypt. Melchiades did not bury there the corpse of his predecessor, St. Eusebius, when he had brought it back from his place of exile in Sicily, but placed it in a sarcophagus in a chamber in another area of the Cemetery of Callixtus, which he prepared and adorned for the purpose. It had been made, indeed, at an earlier period, and made apparently for the purpose of holding assemblies, rather than as a mere place of burial; and during the time that it was so used, it had been ornamented with painting in the usual way. Now, however, it was decorated anew. The roof was painted with a pattern of hexagons and other geometrical figures, containing alternately birds and flowers; the vaulted roofs of the *arcosolia* were covered with mosaics, and the whole walls were faced with various coloured marbles. Pope Melchiades himself was buried in like manner in another crypt that was similarly ornamented, and those who succeeded him were not even buried in this cemetery at all. It was only natural that the Church, under her altered circumstances, should proceed to make free use of monumental architecture above ground. Sylvester, Mark, and Julius, who succeeded one another in the Chair of Peter after Melchiades, were all buried in monuments of this kind—small *cellæ*, or

[1] *Quæritur, inventus colitur, monstrante Deo*, &c., are phrases which occur in his inscriptions.

Basilicas, built near the entrances to the Catacombs, but not within them. Of Mark it is said that he was buried in the Cemetery of Balbina, on the Via Ardeatina, "in a Basilica which he built, and which he constituted a cemetery." There can be little doubt that this means that he attached a priest to this Basilica and placed the cemetery under his jurisdiction, thus raising it to the dignity of a public cemetery of the Church.

Liberius added an area to the Catacomb of St. Callixtus, A.D. 352–366.

Pope Liberius, who came after Julius, added a whole area to the Cemetery of Callixtus, or at least it was added in his time; but he himself was buried in the Cemetery of St. Priscilla. The characteristics of the area added to San Callisto are very marked; the most careless observer can scarcely fail to be struck by them.[1] The principal gallery is double the ordinary width; there is almost a continuous succession of *arcosolia* along the galleries; the *luminaria* are of unusual size and frequency; the *cubicula* also are spacious, and some of them of elegant forms. One especially deserves to be mentioned, because in it were found several fragments of a metrical epitaph in honour of a deacon named Redemptus, and another metrical inscription, to the honour of another deacon, was once here also. Wherefore it has been suggested that perhaps this crypt was specially reserved to be the burial-place of the deacons, as the Papal Crypt was for the bishops; and certainly their intimate official connection with the Catacombs might be considered to entitle them to such a privilege.

It is possible that other subterranean cemeteries also may have received similar extension, for up to this time burial in the Catacombs was far more general than burial in the cemeteries of the other kind of which we have spoken. Cemeteries in the open air were in use before the middle of the fourth century; but if we may form an estimate of the relative proportions in which the two modes of burial were used from the dated inscriptions which have reached us, we should say that

[1] It is the area marked XII in our map.

the change from the one to the other made itself felt under the reign of Constantine's sons, but that down to the end of the Pontificate of Liberius, two out of three burials were in the older or subterranean cemeteries. The other cemeteries were generally over these, and round the Basilicas of the martyrs. A glance at the accompanying sketches of the two *basilicæ* or *cellæ* of St. Sixtus and St. Soteris above the Catacomb of Callixtus will show how thickly the ground round both of them

Other cemeteries not subterranean.

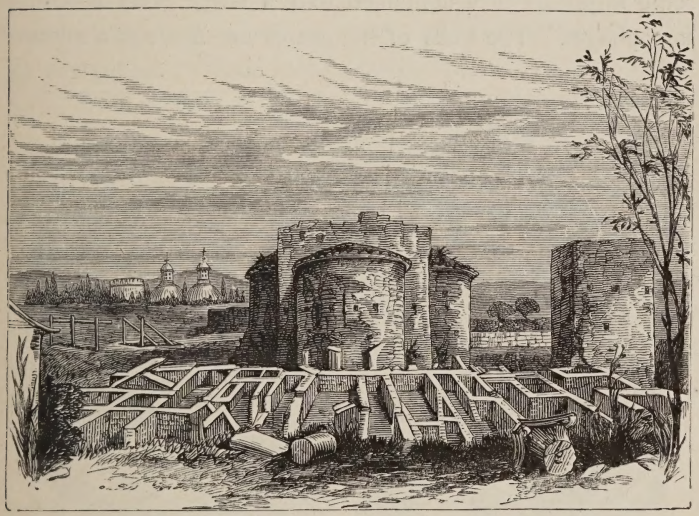


FIG. 19.—*Cella of St. Sixtus, with view of non-subterranean Cemetery round it.*

is occupied by graves; and the partial excavation that has been made round the first shows that these graves were not made at random by individuals choosing at various times places of burial for themselves, but that they form a regularly constituted cemetery, executed according to a general and preconceived plan. They do not begin immediately from the walls; space enough was left for the channels which should carry off the rain from the roof of the building, and which may still be seen, and then the graves follow. Those nearest to the building do not seem to have observed any law of orientation, but those further off are arranged along a line which runs due

east and west. It has not been sufficiently explored to enable us to determine exactly its full extent; but it is certain that on one side at least it observes precisely the same limits as the cemetery below, and it is probable that it is co-extensive with it. Most of the graves were made of sufficient depth to contain four, eight, or even ten bodies, one above the other, but always with a division of some sort, generally a slab of marble, between each. Not all of them, however, are so deep; in some instances they contained only a single body laid in a sarcophagus. The walls of the graves are made of a mixture

Form of their graves.

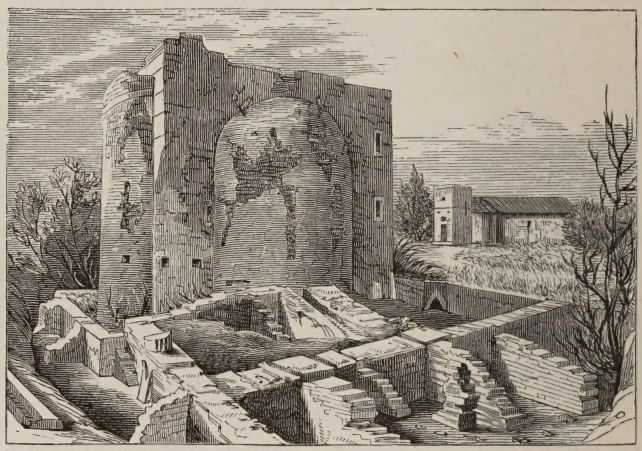


FIG. 20.—*Cella of St. Soteris, with view of Graves excavated round it.*

of bricks and blocks of tufa, the latter predominating, and with thick layers of mortar such as generally characterise the buildings of the fourth and fifth centuries. A few are lined throughout with marble; but more commonly the top and bottom only are made of this material, the cover of one serving as the foundation of the next; and on these marble slabs are often inscribed the names of the deceased, his age, and the date of his death or burial (just as on our own coffin-plates), though the writers must have known that no human eye would ever read them when once they had been fixed in their places, until

they were brought to light by the ruin of the whole tomb, as in our own day.

Many of the epitaphs that have been thus revealed to us are marked with the names of the consuls, so that we can fix their date with certainty. But we know also, from other inscriptions, that burial in the Catacombs was going on at the same time; and from other contemporary sources, that the Catacombs were also much frequented from motives of devotion. The testimony of St. Jerome is decisive upon this point in the well-known passage in which he speaks of his own practice when he was young. "When I was a boy, being educated at Rome," he says, "I used every Sunday, in company with other boys of my own age and tastes, to visit the tombs of the Apostles and martyrs, and to go into the crypts excavated there in the bowels of the earth. The walls on either side as you enter are full of the bodies of the dead, and the whole place is so dark, that one seems almost to see the fulfilment of those words of the prophet, 'Let them go down alive into Hades.' Here and there a little light, admitted from above, suffices to give a momentary relief to the horror of the darkness; but as you go forwards, and find yourself again immersed in the utter blackness of night, the words of the poet come spontaneously to your mind: 'The very silence fills the soul with dread.'"[1]

Testimony of St. Jerome to the state of the Catacombs in the fourth century;

The accuracy of this language as descriptive of the general condition of the Catacombs will be recognised by all who have any familiarity with them; only it is not applicable to every part of them indiscriminately. From the first moment that the Christians were free to express their inward feelings by outward tokens, they hastened to exchange the primitive simplicity of the martyrs' tombs for something more suitable to their own improved condition. Constantine built grand Basilicas over the bodies of the more celebrated saints, such as St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Agnes, St. Sebastian, and St. Laurence. In all these instances, the tomb which it was desired to honour was

[1] In Ezech. lx.

enclosed within the precincts of the church; it was the central point of devotion in it, and was therefore as near as possible to the high altar. But this would not be effected without a great destruction of graves and galleries throughout the neighbourhood. Such Basilicas, however, were absolutely required for the accommodation of the ever-growing body of worshippers, who naturally delighted to pay honour to the tombs of those to whom they owed so much. "The gilded Capitol is squalid with dirt," says St. Jerome, "all the temples of Rome are covered with rust and cobwebs; the whole city is moved from its very foundations; the people pouring forth past the half-ruined shrines of the Pagan deities, run to the tombs of the martyrs; these are venerated everywhere; men gazing on the holy ashes of the dead, and, if they can, kissing them with their lips."[1] And we have an interesting description, from the pen of another contemporary writer, of the scenes of which these tombs of the martyrs were witnesses on each recurring festival.

and of Prudentius.

Prudentius (for it is to him that we refer) brings out in striking contrast the different conditions of different parts of the Catacombs according as they were left in their primitive condition or were honoured and decorated as religious shrines; and in both parts of his description he exactly confirms what we have already heard from St. Jerome. "Not far from the city walls," he says, "among the well-trimmed orchards, there lies a crypt buried in darksome pits. Into its secret recesses a steep path with winding stairs directs one, even though the turnings shut out the light. The light of day, indeed, comes in through the doorway, as far as the surface of the opening, and illuminates the threshold of the portico; and when, as you advance farther, the darkness as of night seems to get more and more obscure throughout the mazes of the cavern, there occur at intervals apertures cut in the roof which convey the

[1] Epist. cvii. ad Lætam, and xlvi. ad Marcellam, Opp. tom. i. pp. 205, 677.

bright rays of the sun upon the cave. Although the recesses, twisting at random this way and that, form narrow chambers with darksome galleries, yet a considerable quantity of light finds its way through the pierced vaulting down into the hollow bowels of the mountain. And thus throughout the subterranean crypt it is possible to perceive the brightness and enjoy the light of the absent sun. To such secret places is the body of Hippolytus conveyed, near to the spot where now stands the altar dedicated to God. That same altar-slab (*mensa*) gives the Sacrament, and is the faithful guardian of its martyr's bones, which it keeps laid up there in expectation of the eternal Judge, while it feeds the dwellers on the Tiber with holy food. Wondrous is the sanctity of the place! the altar is at hand for those who pray, and it assists the hopes of men by mercifully granting what they need. Here have I, when sick with ills both of soul and body, oftentimes prostrated myself in prayer and found relief. Yes, O glorious priest! I will tell with what joy I return to enjoy the privilege of embracing thee, and that I know that I owe all this to Hippolytus, to whom Christ, our God, has granted power to obtain whatever any one asks of him. That little chapel (*ædicula*) which contains the cast-off garments of his soul [his relics] is bright with solid silver. Wealthy hands have put up tablets glistening with a smooth surface [of silver], bright as a concave mirror; and, not content with overlaying the entrance with Parian marble, they have lavished large sums of money on the ornamentation of the work."

Shrine richly decorated,

He then goes on to describe the pilgrimages to the shrine; and with somewhat of poetic licence, perhaps, yet in the main, no doubt, with substantial truth, he continues: "Early in the morning they come to salute [the saint]: all the youth of the place worship there: they come and go until the setting of the sun. Love of religion collects together into one dense crowd both Latins and foreigners; they imprint their kisses on the shining silver; they pour out their sweet balsams; they bedew

and devoutly visited.

their faces with tears." His description of the scene on the *festa* of the martyr, his *dies natalis*, reminds one forcibly of the way in which the modern Romans stream out to San Lorenzo, or to San Paolo *fuori le mura*, or to any other of the old churches, when a festival or a station is held there. "The imperial city vomits forth her stream of Romans, and the plebeian crowd, animated by one and the same desire, jostle on equal terms their patrician neighbours, faith hurrying them forward to the shrine. Albano's gates, too, send forth their white-robed host in a long-drawn line. The noise on the various roads on all sides waxes loud: the native of the Abruzzi and the Etruscan peasant come, the fierce Samnite, the countryman of lofty Capua and of Nola, is there; each with his wife and children delights to hasten on his road. The broad fields scarcely suffice to contain the joyful people, and even where the space is wide, the crowd is so great as to cause delay. No doubt, then, that that cavern, wide though its mouth be stretched, is too narrow for such crowds; but hard by is another church (*templum*), enriched with royal magnificence, which this great gathering may visit;"[1] and then follows the description of a Basilica, supposed by many to be the original Basilica of San Lorenzo in Agro Verano.

Scene on the *festa* of the Saint.

This devotion to the martyrs found vent in other ways besides paying visits to their tombs on the anniversaries of their martyrdom. Christians were extremely anxious to be buried as near as possible to these sacred spots; and to gratify this desire they excavated graves at the back of the *arcosolia*, not sparing even the paintings with which their forefathers had adorned them. They destroyed the symmetry of the chapels with new monuments and sarcophagi, and often endangered the safety of the constructions by indiscreet excavations. This practice is attested by many inscriptions which have come down to us. One speaks of "a new crypt behind the

Damage done to Catacombs by indiscreet devotion.

Examples.

[1] Prudent. Peristeph., xi. 153, &c.

saints," in which two ladies bought a double grave for themselves during their lifetime from two fossors—

IN CRYPTA NOBA RETRO SAN
CTVS EMERVM SE VIVAS BALER
RA ET SABINA MERVM LOC
V BISOM AB APRONE ET A
BIATORE.

"Valeria and Sabina, during their lifetime, bought a place for two bodies from Apro and Victor in the new crypt behind the saints."

Here is another inscription which testifies to a similar purchase of a single grave near St. Cornelius—

SEREPENTIV
S EMIT LOC
M A QUINTO
FOSSORE AD
SANTVM C
RNELIVM.

"Serpentius bought from Quintus the fossor a grave near St. Cornelius."

A third records the purchase of a grave for a father and mother and one daughter, "above the *arcosolium*," at the very tomb of St. Hippolytus, of which we have heard so much from Prudentius (*at Ippolytv svper arcosoliv*)—unless, indeed, it were at the grave of another St. Hippolytus, of whom we shall hear by and by, in an arenarium on the Appian Way. *R.S.*, iii. 215.

A fourth inscription, of the year 381 (during the pontificate of Damasus), tells us of one who obtained the privilege of burial "within the thresholds of the saints, a thing which many desire and few obtain" (*intra limina sanctorum, quod multi cupiunt et rari accipiunt*).[1] *C.I.*, i. No. 653.

Many other inscriptions might be quoted in illustration of this practice: there are also the examples of St. Gregory Nazianzus, St. Paulinus of Nola, and others, and a short

[1] Bullett., 1864, p. 33.

treatise by the great St. Augustine, written at the request of St. Paulinus, in which he explains and justifies it.[1] Indeed, nothing could be more natural; but no doubt it was liable, like so many other natural laudable feelings, to be abused and made the occasion of an irreligious superstition, so that there may have been good reason for the warning given by the Archdeacon Sabinus in the next century in his epitaph, which has lately been found at San Lorenzo, wherein he tells the faithful that the only way to obtain a place near the saints is to imitate their lives—

NIL JVVAT IMMO GRAVAT TVMVLIS HÆRERE PIORVM
SANCTORVM MERITIS OPTIMA VITA PROPE EST.
CORPORE NON OPVS EST, ANIMA TENDAMVS AD ILLOS
QUÆ BENE SALVA POTEST CORPORIS ESSE SALVS.

"It nothing helps, but rather hinders, [merely] to stick close to the tombs of the saints; a good life is the best approach to the saints' merits. Not with the body, but with the soul, we must make our way to them; when that is well saved, it is able to be the salvation of the body also."

In consequence of this desire to be buried near the tombs of the martyrs, the whole plan and system of excavation in the Catacombs was changed. Long and regular galleries are no longer made for the burial of all the faithful indiscriminately, but a few isolated graves here and there, without plan or order, wherever any vacant space could be found or made in the situations that were coveted. The symmetry of the chambers was spoilt and their decorations destroyed by introducing sarcophagi into the area or making *loculi* in the walls; or new crypts were made at the back of old ones, leaving a very insufficient interval of rock between them. And these works were executed no longer at the charge of the faithful generally, under the superintendence of the higher clergy, but at the private cost of the individuals who were benefited by them,

[1] See Note D. in Appendix.

and who made their own contracts with the fossors of each particular cemetery. Numerous inscriptions have reached us giving all the details of these contracts, as to the situation of the graves, the names of the buyer and seller, and even the price agreed upon. But we will reserve these for a future chapter.

CHAPTER V.

POPE DAMASUS.

Work of Pope Damasus in the Catacombs—His artist, Furius Dionysius Filocalus—Value of his inscriptions as guides to the topography of the Catacombs—The Basilica of Petronilla, discovered in 1873, *described—Identified by monuments of art, both sculpture and painting—History of its destruction.*

Work of Pope Damasus, A.D. 366–385,

WE come now to speak of a Pope to whom all lovers of Christian archæology owe a singular debt of gratitude —we mean, of course, St. Damasus. He succeeded Liberius in the Chair of Peter, and his devotion to the Catacombs was as intelligent as it was unwearied. It has been already mentioned that he used great diligence to recover those tombs of the martyrs which still lay hid, and when he had found them, he desired to make them more easy of access, and more instructive when they were visited. He therefore made new staircases and widened the galleries which led to them; blocked up certain passages, so as to check indiscriminate rambles in the subterranean labyrinth, and to guide the pilgrims perforce to the shrines where they desired to pay the homage of their devotion; covered the walls of the more sacred chambers with marble; opened new shafts to admit more air and light, and supported the friable *tufa* walls and roofs of the galleries, wherever it was necessary, with walls and arches of brick.

and his artist, Furius Dionysius Filocalus.

He also wrote short sets of verses, in which he commemorated the glorious deeds and sufferings of the martyrs, and caused them to be engraved at various shrines on marble slabs in a peculiarly beautiful character by a very able artist, Furius Dionysius Filocalus. This artist evidently had a special per-

sonal attachment to the holy Pontiff; indeed, in one of his inscriptions he distinctly styles himself his *cultor atque amator;* and it is a remarkable fact that no inscription of Pope Damasus has yet been found that was not engraved by Filocalus, and no exact specimen of the peculiar letters of Filocalus except in the inscriptions of Damasus. Some of the works begun by Damasus were finished by his successor, Siricius; and, therefore, some of the inscriptions with which they were adorned, though manifestly engraved in close imitation of the style of Filocalus, and by one of his school, yet present also certain unmistakable marks of difference from the usual specimens of the great master.

The devotion of this Pope to the Catacombs seems to have given a momentary check to the practice of burial elsewhere: during some of the earlier years of his Pontificate (notably in the years 370 and 371) there is a marked increase in the proportion of subterranean graves. On the other hand, at a later period, the proportion is directly and rapidly reversed, so that towards the conclusion of his reign burials in the Catacombs became more and more rare. We can easily imagine the displeasure with which he would witness the injury done to the ancient monuments of the Catacombs by that indiscreet zeal and devotion of which we have spoken in our last chapter. It is very possible that he may at last have prohibited it. At any rate, he did his best to discourage it by his own example. No one had a greater right to be buried in a privileged spot in the Catacombs than he who had done so much for them, yet he chose rather to build himself a tomb above ground (near the Cemetery of Domitilla), recording at the same time upon a tablet in the Papal Crypt the reason for his not being buried within it:

HIC FATEOR DAMASVS VOLVI MEA CONDERE MEMBRA,
SED TIMVI SANCTOS CINERES VEXARE PIORVM.

"Here I, Damasus, wished to bury my limbs, but I was afraid of disturbing the holy ashes of the saints."

Inscriptions of Pope Damasus.

Almost all the Catacombs bear traces of the labours of Damasus, and the fragments of his inscriptions which come to light from time to time are among the most valuable clues whereby De Rossi has been enabled to recover the topography and history of these wonderful excavations. Some fragments have been found belonging to inscriptions of which we had no copies before, and the fragments are too minute to enable us to extract any sense from them. We have to regret losses of this kind at San Lorenzo *in Lucina*, San Lorenzo *fuori le mura*, San Clemente, and on Monte Celio. But in most cases, however small the fragments may be, De Rossi recognises them at once as forming part of some inscription known to us before by means of the copies of Roman inscriptions made by the scholars of Alcuin in the eighth and ninth centuries; and the value of the discovery has consisted in this, that it has enabled him to identify with certainty the places where they were set up, and so the burial-place of this or that martyr. We shall see several examples of this in the part of this volume devoted to the Cemetery of St. Callixtus. Here we will speak of two other cemeteries, in which there have been discovered not merely inscriptions by Pope Damasus, but whole basilicas built or excavated by him. The narrative of these discoveries is both interesting in itself and will teach us a good deal about the history of the Catacombs generally during the century with which we are still concerned—the fourth.

Bull., 1873, p. 35; 1870, p. 140.

Subterranean Basilica of St. Petronilla.

The first of the two discoveries may almost be said to have been made in 1854—that is to say, the Commission of Sacred Archæology, in the course of their usual work of excavation in that year, came upon two sarcophagi, four marble columns, and other tokens, which assured them of the presence of some large building in the Cemetery of Domitilla, or of SS. Nereus and Achilleus. Their labours, however, were at that time interrupted, and when De Rossi was able to resume them in 1873, the sarcophagi and the marble columns had been stolen. But the prosecution of the work revealed the bases on which

Bull., 1874, pp. 1–35.

the columns had stood, and the whole building of which they had formed a part. This was no mere subterranean chamber or small chapel, but a real Basilica, as large as that of San Lorenzo *fuori le mura*, which had been buried for hundreds of years in the bowels of the earth. It was irregular in shape, and very badly built, yet still a most interesting monument of antiquity. Its walls were of brickwork mixed with blocks of tufa, as is common in works of the fourth and fifth centuries. They were not strictly parallel with one another; and this irregularity had been caused, apparently, by a desire on the part of the builders to avail themselves of part of an older building which stood on one side of the apse. The extreme length of the Basilica is nearly 100 feet, and the breadth in its widest part upwards of 60, and the present height of the walls about 23.[1] Originally its roof must have appeared high above the ground. The area is divided into a nave and two aisles, which are separated from the nave by four columns. At one end of the building is a narrow vestibule, divided from the nave by two columns. The apse at the opposite end terminates in a niche, which once contained the *cathedra* or episcopal chair, and traces may still be seen of the place which it occupied, and of the semicircular bench which ran round the wall on either side of it for the use of the clergy. Everything, however, even to the very pavement, had evidently been carefully removed before the building was deserted; and some unskilled hand had rudely drawn on the plaster of the niche reminiscences of what he had seen there—a priest in his vestments seated in a chair, and a pulpit or *ambo*, whence he had been wont to hear the reading of Holy Scripture or the preaching of a sermon.

Its connection with the Catacomb.

The important point for us to consider, as historians of the Catacombs, is the relation between this remarkable building and the subterranean cemetery in the midst of which it was placed. It is clear that they were intimately connected,

[1] See Plate II.

and that the cemetery was in existence before the building. Several galleries of the Catacomb have been partially destroyed by it, and others blocked up. The pavement of the church was only a little higher than the second story of the cemetery, to which there are two entrances from behind the apse. Another gallery of the cemetery also enters the enclosure of the Basilica, having in it two large recesses for sarcophagi. In a word, the cemetery was not formed gradually round the Basilica, as our English churchyards grew up round our churches, but the Basilica was built to do honour to some part of the cemetery.

What then was the great object of attraction, the centre of devotion which it was desired to honour? It has been already mentioned that the most ancient name of this Catacomb was *Cœmeterium Domitillæ;* but that at a later period, when the names of the martyrs generally superseded those of the owners of the soil, it was consecrated by three names, Petronilla, Nereus, and Achilleus. Could any memorial be found among the ruins of either of these Saints?

Inscription to SS. Nereus and Achilleus.

The first which came to light was in itself conclusive with reference to two of them, though, as we shall presently see, it was afterwards confirmed by others. It was a large fragment of an inscription, which had fallen into an open grave underneath the pavement of the apse, and at first sight everybody would be disposed to claim it as one of the Damasine inscriptions engraved by Furius Dionysius Filocalus. On closer inspection, we can detect certain minute differences in the manner of execution, not enough to indicate the hand of another artist, but rather as if made for some special purpose by the same artist; and of these we will speak presently. But first we will look at the contents of the fragment. They are parts of an inscription of eight lines, which had long been known to scholars, and published among the works of Damasus, at first as commemorating certain "unknown martyrs," but more recently as "of SS. Nereus and Achilleus,"

on the authority of more than one ancient MS., which states that it was seen at their sepulchre. This sepulchre, however, was generally understood to be the tomb to which their relics were translated by Cardinal Baronius in the sixteenth century, in the church dedicated to their memory within the walls. But this discovery of a fragment of the original stone in the suburban cemetery in which they were first buried corrects this error, and leaves no room for further discussion about it.

The inscription runs thus (the letters printed in italics being those which have been recovered) :—

MILITIÆ NOMEN DEDERANT SÆVUM*QUE* GEREBANT
OFFICIUM PARITER SPECTANTES JUSS*A TYR*ANNI
PRÆCEPTIS PULSANTE METU SERVI*RE PAR*ATI
MIRA FIDES RERUM SUBITO POSUE*RE FUROREM*
CONVERSI FUGIUNT DUCIS IMPIA CASTR*A RELINQUUNT*
PROJICIUNT CLYPEOS FALERAS TEL*AQ. CRUENTA*
CONFESSI GAUDENT CHRISTI PORTAR*E TRIUMFOS*
CREDITE PER DAMASUM POSSIT QUID *GLORIA CHRISTI.*

"They had given their names to the army, and were at the same time fulfilling a cruel office, heeding the commands of the tyrant, and prepared to obey his commands under the influence of fear. Suddenly—wonderful to believe are these things—they laid aside their madness, are converted and fly ; they desert the wicked camp of their leader, throw away their shields, military ornaments and blood-stained weapons. Confessing [the faith], they glory in bearing the triumphs of Christ [by martyrdom]. Believe [all ye who read], by [these verses of] Damasus, what [marvels] the glory of Christ can effect."

In order to appreciate the sense of these lines, it is well that we should remember that it was one of Nero's crimes that he employed some of his soldiers, his own bodyguard, the Prætorian cohort, to be the executioners of his unjust sentences against those whom he was determined to destroy.[1] The first lines of the inscription evidently allude to this, and it is mentioned as the justification of the act of the Saints in deserting their military office. They had obeyed through fear ; now they boldly confess Christ, and suffer martyrdom for His

[1] Juvenal, Sat. x. 15-18.

sake. The reader will remember that this martyrdom has been already assigned in these pages to the first century,[1] and will observe that this account of their conversion gives some countenance to the chronology. On the other hand, the inscription says nothing about their having filled the post of *eunuchi*

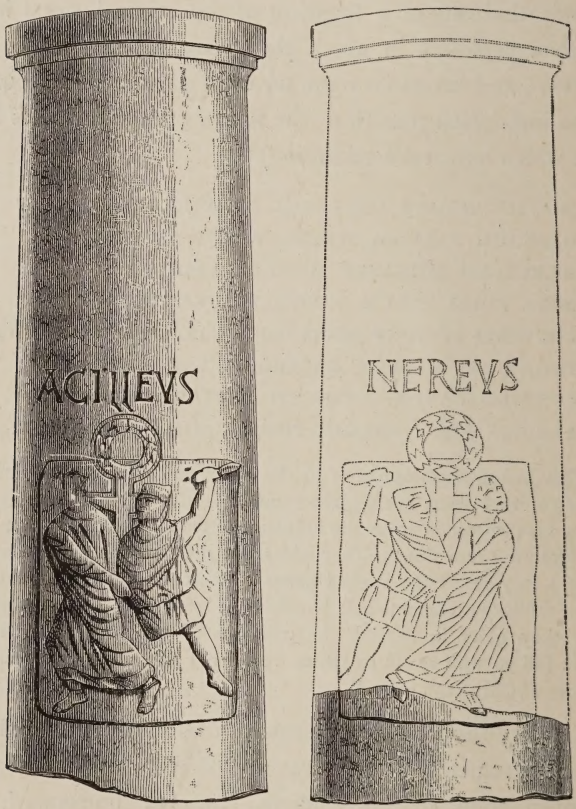


FIG. 21.—*Pillar with Basso-rilievo Representation of the Martyrdom of St. Achilleus, and fragment of another Pillar with similar Representation of St. Nereus.*

cubicularii to Domitilla, and might at first sight seem almost to contradict such an idea. On the other hand, the fact of their being buried in ground which belonged to that lady indicates some connection between them; and as to the precise title which is given them, the Acts from which it is

[1] See page 121.

taken are a work of the fifth or sixth century, confessedly translated from the Greek, and nothing is more natural than that the translator should have introduced titles with which the Byzantine court of the day made him familiar. But, setting the Acts on one side, the inscription must at least be admitted as evidence that this was the cemetery in which their sepulchre was shown in the fourth century.

Votive columns to these Saints.

If any sceptical reader refuses to give credence to as much as this on the testimony of old MSS., let him study the carving on the marble column, which was found in 1874 in a lower gallery of the cemetery, into which it had fallen through the pavement of the Basilica. The bas-relief gives us a representation of the martyrdom of Achilleus, together with his name, and the *triumphus Christi*, the crown on the top of a cross, between the executioner and his victim. The base of the corresponding pillar shows that a similar representation was once to be seen there also of St. Nereus. It is impossible to doubt, then, that it was in this church that St. Gregory the Great preached that homily which appears among his works, having been taken down (as he tells us) by a shorthand writer who heard him deliver it "before the tombs of SS. Nereus and Achilleus," and that Cardinal Baronius was in error when he caused a portion of it to be engraved on the episcopal chair in the church within the city, as if it had been delivered there.

Painting of St. Petronilla.

We have still to seek for some memorial of St. Petronilla, and this too has been most happily discovered. At the back of the apse is a small chamber, in which the *arcosolium* is partially blocked up with masonry; and on the plaster of this wall is the accompanying picture, which is easily understood. The young Petronilla, here called a martyr, stands by the side of an elderly matron, named Veneranda, who had died or was buried (the imperfect letters may stand with equal propriety either for DEF or DEP, *defuncta* or *deposita*) on the 7th of January. Doubtless, she is here represented as the advocate

Bull., 1875, pp. 5–37.

FIG. 22.—*Fresco on Wall behind the Basilica of SS. Nereus and Achilleus.*

of the deceased lady whom she is introducing into Paradise, pointing, at the same time, to the books of Holy Scripture in the chest by her side, which are, as it were, the proofs and

token of her Christian faith. The inscription upon the stone which once closed the remainder of this *arcosolium* bore a date, of which sufficient fragments remain to enable us to say that it must have been of the year 320, 326, or 356; most probably the latter, and this may very well have been the date of the painting also. By that time we know how common was the desire to be buried near the martyrs, and how general the belief that some spiritual advantage could be gained thereby. This chamber, and the whole of the *arcosolium*, even its arch, is crowded with graves—a sure evidence of the proximity of some shrine. It was for this reason that Veneranda was thus placed under the patronage, as it were, of Petronilla—viz., because she was buried in the neighbourhood of her tomb.

Probable site of her tomb.

We cannot now identify the precise site of that tomb; we only know that it was a sarcophagus engraved with the words AURELIÆ PETRONILLÆ FILIÆ DULCISSIMÆ; and that this was removed by Pope Stephen II., or his successor, to a building close to St. Peter's, which had been the mausoleum of the Emperor Honorius and his wife, but which was afterwards taken down and its site included within the present Basilica, where an altar was dedicated in her honour. Many of our readers may have admired the copy in mosaic which is placed over it of Guercino's picture of the opening of the Saint's tomb that her lover might be satisfied as to the reality of her death. For the story was, that when her hand was asked in marriage by some noble Roman, she begged for a delay of three days in which she might make her decision; that these days were spent in fasting and prayer, and that on the last day, "the mysteries of the Lord's oblation having been celebrated, she received the Sacrament of Christ, lay back on her couch, and gave up her spirit."[1] There is nothing improbable in her hand having been sought in marriage by one of noble blood, as we have already seen that she was not the daughter of the Jewish fisherman and Christian Apostle, but must have

Bull., 1863, p. 55.

[1] Ado, Martyr., 31 Maii, p. 241.

Epitaphs of members of Flavian family.

been descended from a noble Roman family. Her names, Aurelia Petronilla, are a sufficient proof of this; and the latter name seems to indicate a connection with the very family to which Domitilla herself belonged, the family of the Flavii. Among the stones discovered here is a fragment which De Rossi proposes to supply in the manner indicated below, and which he believes to have been a tablet set up over the entrance of the Catacomb :—

*SEPULC*RUM
*FLAVI*ORUM

with an anchor engraved below it. The letters are very beautifully incised, and worthy, in De Rossi's opinion, of being compared with the best Pagan inscriptions of the same period. Of course the supplement is too uncertain to build any argument upon; yet it is not so purely conjectural as it seems, since in a stone so carefully engraved the position of the anchor is enough to assure us of its dimensions, and it is not easy to suggest any other words that would not require more letters than there is room for. Other members of the Flavian family were certainly buried here. On a large marble slab in the neighbourhood were inscribed in fine Greek characters—

ΦΛ · CABEINOC · KAI
TITIANH · ΑΔΕΛΦΟΙ

"Flavius Sabinus and Titiana; brother and sister."

On another unopened grave he found a dove and a monogram of the name Flavilla; and it seems certain that the following, published by Marangoni, came from this same cemetery—

ΦΛ · ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟC
ΠΡ KAI
ΟΥΛΠΙ · KONKOPΔIA
CΥMB.

"Flavius Ptolemæus, Prætor, and Ulpia Concordia, his wife."

The name of Ptolemy naturally suggests Egypt, and it appears that there were no less than three men of the name of Flavius

Titianus who held the prefecture of that country in the years 126, 166, and 215. We cannot doubt, then, that the husband of Ulpia Concordia was one of the same family.

St. Petronilla not a martyr.

But whilst we are thus accumulating evidence which tends to corroborate one part of the story of St. Petronilla, we are proportionately throwing discredit on another part, or else upon the title given to her on the painting. She is there called Martyr, whereas in the legend there is not only no evidence to show that she shed her blood for the faith, but she does not seem to have been called upon to suffer anything on its account, nor even to make a public confession of it. And here De Rossi is disposed to give credence to the legend rather than to the artist. If Petronilla had really been a martyr, the Martyrologies would not have failed to give her that title, whereas they seem uniformly to withhold it. Nevertheless she enjoyed a great celebrity, of which the way in which her name has been connected with St. Peter's is a sufficient proof; and at a time when the devotion of the faithful was so warmly and so exclusively exhibited towards the martyrs, this singular pre-eminence of Petronilla may have betrayed the artist into the blunder we are speaking of.

History of the Basilica.

We have said enough to identify the newly-discovered Basilica; let us now return to its history. We said that the verses in honour of SS. Nereus and Achilleus, though confessedly written by Pope Damasus, were not engraved precisely in the same way in which his inscriptions usually are. The same observation has been made with reference to two or three other inscriptions in the Catacombs; and it appears that they were set up in the time of his successor, Siricius. So here, too, it can be proved that though this Basilica may have been begun by Damasus, yet he was certainly dead before it was finished; for a tomb has been found underneath the pavement, in a place which would have been inaccessible after the completion of the Basilica, bearing the date A.D. 395, ten years after the death of Damasus. The Basilica, then, must

be attributed to his successor. It was frequented as a place of public assembly in the days of St. Gregory the Great, at which time oil was taken from its shrines, and sent as a precious relic to Theodelinda, Queen of the Lombards; and the label which was sent with it may still be read in the treasury of the cathedral at Monza, "of St. Petronilla, daughter of St. Peter the Apostle, of St. Nereus, and of St. Achilleus." The same names appear in the Itineraries compiled by pilgrims from various nations who visited it in the seventh century. Pope Gregory III. (A.D. 715–741) appointed an annual station to be held here, and made offerings of a golden crown, a silver chalice and paten, and other church ornaments. At the end of the same century, we read that Pope Leo III., seeing the Church of SS. Nereus and Achilleus in danger of falling, and much injured by the inundation of waters, built another in a higher spot in the immediate neighbourhood. We do not know that any trace has yet been found of Leo's church "built in a higher place," but the situation of the Basilica we have been describing would certainly have exposed it to the inundation of waters, and if a new church was built very near it, we can understand the careful removal of the stone chair and benches, the *ambones*, and the pavement from the old one, and their transfer to the new, whilst all the columns of the building, its sarcophagi, and other monuments remained untouched. The very doorway was walled up, and every precaution taken that it should not be desecrated. A hundred years later, in 897, there was an earthquake which did great damage to Rome, especially to the Lateran Basilica; and it is probable that the old Basilica of St. Petronilla was finally destroyed at the same time; the position of the columns, all lying in one direction across the floor, seems to point to some such cause of its ruin.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CEMETERY OF GENEROSA.

The Cemetery of Generosa, how and where discovered—Identified as tomb of SS. Simplicius, Faustinus, and Beatrix—How they were buried here—Ornamented by Pope Damasus by a Basilica—Described—Tomb of martyrs—Sepulchre of Florentius—Peculiarities of sepulture—Peculiar nomenclature—History of this cemetery—Working plan of a Catacomb—The Fossors, their zeal and devotedness—Their place among the clergy—They were maintained by the Church—In the fourth and fifth century they sold graves in the Catacombs—Particulars of sale recorded on monuments—Probably registered also elsewhere—The price paid uncertain, but always high.

The Cemetery of Generosa.

THE Cemetery of Generosa is outside the zone which includes what are ordinarily called the Roman Catacombs. It is rather a suburban cemetery than one of those belonging to the city; the cemetery of a small country parish, as De Rossi calls it; and when compared with the Cemetery of St. Callixtus, which was the Papal cemetery—the arch-cemetery (so to call it) of Rome—it is, according to the same authority, a mere pigmy in the presence of a giant. Nevertheless, as its use began and ended within the period with which we are at present concerned—the fourth century,—we may be excused for treating of it; and as it has been recovered in an unusual state of integrity, we shall find it well worth examining.

R.S., iii. 643.

How and where discovered.

First we will tell the history of its discovery, which was quite accidental, in the course of a search after much-prized Pagan monuments which happened to lie in the same locality. All classical students have heard of the Fratres Arvales, one of the oldest and most aristocratic of the religious sodalities of Rome. It was their duty to offer sacrifices in the month of May for a blessing on the fruits of the field; also on the birthdays of the Emperor and the principal members of his family, and on other

great state occasions. From the time of Tiberius they kept a record of all their acts on tablets of marble, which were at first attached to the walls of their temple, the *templum Deæ Diæ;* then to the seats in the grove which surrounded the temple, and finally to the walls of other houses belonging to them elsewhere. They are of great value for the light they throw on many vexed questions of chronology during the imperial period. An important work was published by the learned Marini in illustration of such portions of these tablets as had come to light before his day. They had been discovered in the sixteenth century under a vineyard on the right-hand side of the Via Portuensis, about five miles from the city. In 1858

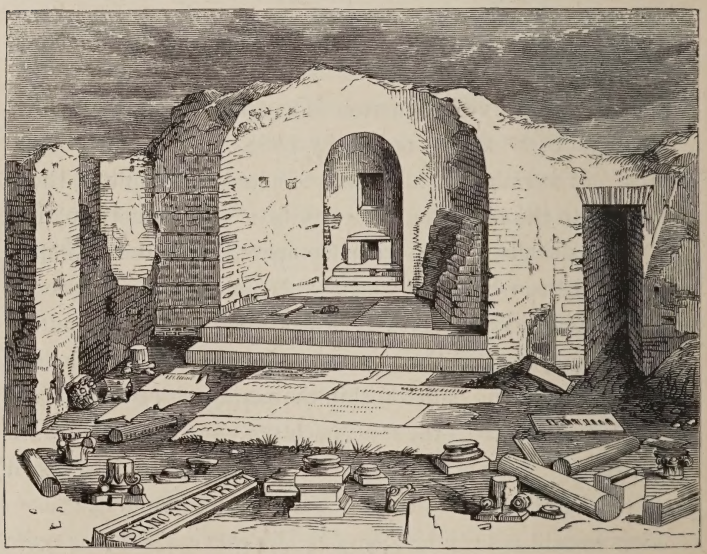


FIG. 23.—*Basilica recently discovered at the Cemetery of Generosa.*

a few more fragments, and in August 1866 an entire tablet, were discovered in the same place; whereupon there was a great desire among the learned to institute a regular search in a place which seemed to promise so much. The necessary funds were supplied by the Royal Family of Prussia, and the work of excavation was carried on under the direction of the

great Prussian archæologist, M. Henzen. At first nothing was found; but when they transferred their labour from the bottom of the hill to the top, they came on something quite unlooked-for; graves of a non-subterranean Christian cemetery, some of which were covered with a few of the coveted tablets. Henceforward, the search was continued in the interests of Christian as well as of Pagan archæology, and it was rewarded by rich and unexpected results. Other Christian inscriptions came to light belonging to the fourth century; bases and capitals of columns; fragments of a marble architrave, having on them a few letters of the familiar Damasine type; an entrance to a catacomb was laid open; and finally, in 1868, an oratory or small Basilica, made according to the usual type of the Damasine buildings. The apse was almost perfect; in the semicircular recess at the end of it was another smaller recess (as in the Basilica of St. Petronilla) for the episcopal *cathedra*; and behind this chair was a window. At last they penetrated into a *cubiculum*, which bore evident marks of having been the principal centre of attraction in the cemetery. It was situated immediately behind the apse of the Basilica; and the window which we have described opened directly upon it. On one of the walls of the *cubiculum* were paintings (of very late date, *i.e.*, of the seventh century) of our Blessed Lord seated, with two saints standing on either side of Him. The legends of those on the left are $\overline{\text{SCS}}$ + FAUSTINIANUS and $\overline{\text{SCS}}$ RUFINIANUS. Of those on the right, one is hopelessly effaced; the other represents a woman in rich apparel, but only the last letters of her name, TRIS, can be deciphered. More fragments, however, of the Damasine inscription found within the Basilica here come to our aid, and enable us to supply VIATRIS.

Identified as tomb of SS. Simplicius, Faustinus, and Beatrix.

With this clue, De Rossi had not long to search before he could identify the martyrs whose memorial was before him. The "Liber Pontificalis" records of Leo II., A.D. 683, that he built a church in Rome near St. Bibiana, in which he placed the bodies of SS. Simplicius, Faustinus, and Beatrix, and of

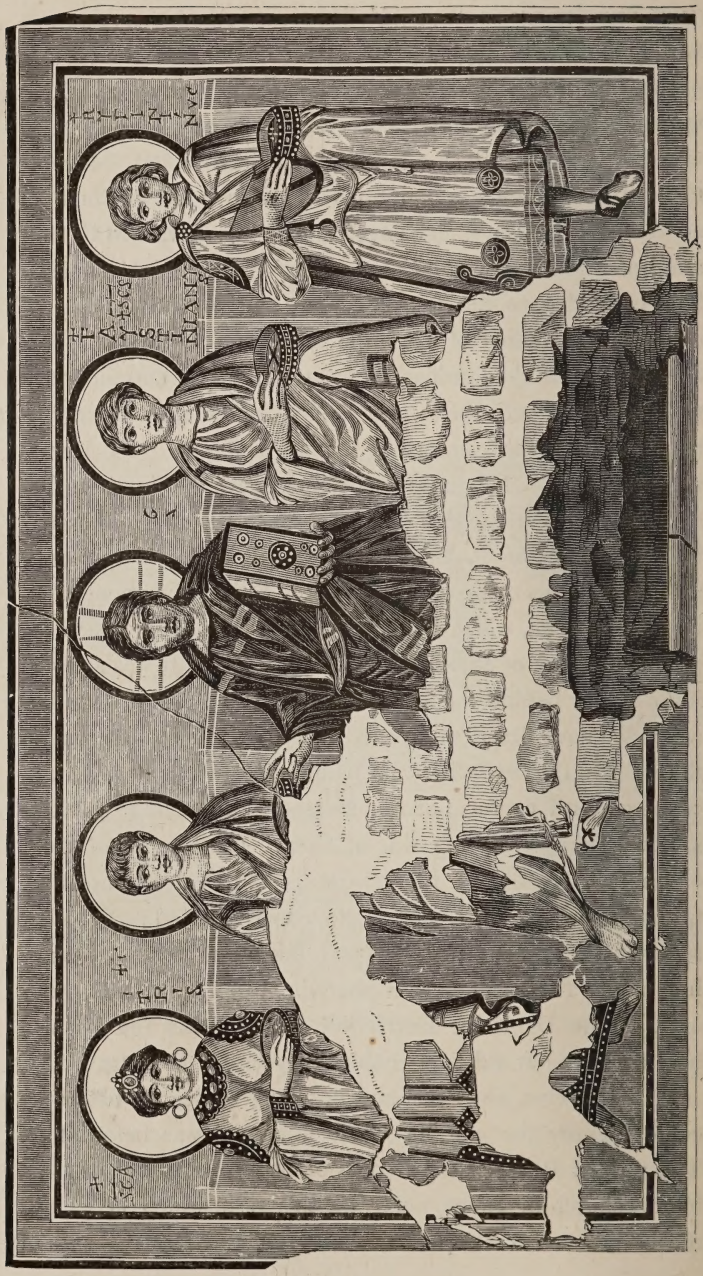


FIG. 24.—*Fresco in Cubiculum behind the Basilica at the Cemetery of Generosa.*

other martyrs. Then there is an inscription on the front of a sarcophagus which has been moved from one place to another in the Basilica, or sacristy, or precincts of St. Mary Major's for the last three or four hundred years, and which was probably written at the time of the translation of the relics by Leo, and this inscription runs thus : ☧ *Martires Simplicius et Faustinus qui passi sunt in flumen Tibere et positi sunt in Cœmeterium Generoses super Filippi.* Lastly, the old Martyrologies fix the *natale* of saints of these names on the 29th of July; and their legend in the Martyrology of Ado (compiled in the ninth century) states that they suffered in the persecution of Diocletian; that the two men were thrown into the Tiber from off the bridge called *Lapideus* (probably a corruption of *Lepidi*); that their bodies were recovered by their sister Beatrix and the priests Crispus and John, and were buried in a place called *Sextum Philippi* on the Via Portuensis; finally, that Beatrix herself suffered martyrdom not long afterwards, and was buried by the venerable Lucina near her martyred brothers.

The reader will observe that this legend says nothing of St. Rufinianus; nor has De Rossi been able to identify this saint, unless the name be only another form of Rufus (as Faustinianus certainly is of Faustinus), in which case it appears in the "Martyrologium Hieronymianum" on the same day as the rest. But he is nowhere associated with them in their Acts; and his dress, as represented in this painting, would seem to show that he belonged to a different grade of society; it indicates that he was an officer of the imperial court, and perhaps, like St. Sebastian, he had been called upon to make his choice between the service of his Emperor and his God. But at any rate, nobody can doubt that we have here a memorial of the three other Saints whose names have been mentioned, and that we may therefore safely supply the name of Simplicius for the legend which can no longer be distinguished.

But how came the memorial of these Saints to be here? Is this the place mentioned in their Acts under the name of

How they were buried here.

Sextum Philippi, and in the inscription as *super Filippi?* The evidence of a Christian writer of the fifth century is objected against us, because he put the farm *Sextum Philippi* seven or eight miles farther down the river, near the island called *Isola Sacra*. But a careful examination of all the passages in which this place is mentioned had long since led Bosio to suspect that the name belonged to a considerable tract of country, viz., all the low land which stretches out towards the sea, beyond the height on which this cemetery has been excavated, and which is the last spur of the whole range of hills on that side of the Tiber. There is therefore no real inconsistency between the locality of the newly discovered cemetery and the description of it in ancient documents. On the contrary, there is a special fitness in the word used, *super Filippi;* for the cemetery is in the hill which overlooked the *prædium Filippi*. Moreover, it is just opposite a reach of the river, where the bodies of the martyrs might easily have drifted ashore, and so been recovered by those who were looking for them; and nothing was more natural than that, in a time of persecution such as was then raging, they should have made use of the nearest and most convenient spot, in which to bury, at least temporarily, the sacred relics. A bypath, which in the recent excavations has been partially laid bare, leads out of the Via Capena or Portuensis just at this place, and goes up the hill into the country. We shall presently learn that there is reason to believe that the sacred grove of the Fratres Arvales was deserted at this time; and an inscription which has been found here recording the murder of one Julius Timotheus with seven of his *alumni* by assassins who had been lying in wait for them (*deceptus a latronibus cum alumnis n. vii.*) seems to countenance the idea that it was a lonely spot. Anyhow nothing interfered with the execution of the pious purpose of Viatrix and her assistants on the night of the 29th July, A.D. 303 or 304; they proceeded to deposit the precious remains they had recovered within the recesses of a sandpit, on the property (we

may suppose) of a Christian lady named Generosa, and penetrating under the sacred grove of the Fratres.

The spot was too far out of Rome ever to be made the site of one of the city cemeteries; but it naturally became the nucleus of a small cemetery in which the few Christians of the neighbourhood were buried; and after the conversion of Constantine, these of course increased in number, so that by the end of the century from seven to eight hundred Christians had found their last resting-place here. Damasus honoured the tombs of these martyrs in his usual way, and they continued to be visited by pious pilgrims until the translation of the relics towards the end of the seventh century. The whole history of the Catacomb is written with unusual clearness and certainty in its monuments; and it is so small that, with the help of the accompanying plan, we may hope, even within our own narrow limits, to give our readers a tolerably distinct notion of it. We are encouraged to make the attempt, both for its own sake and also because it throws considerable light upon the way in which minute topographical observations can be made to supply important historical information.

Ornamented by Pope Damasus by a Basilica.

At the first glance at the map, it is obvious that the paths of the cemetery depend upon two principal centres. The first set of galleries had their beginning from A; another from B or B′. Let us first enter at A. After descending five steps, we find ourselves in the wide gallery of a sandpit, which has been contracted, however, on both sides by a wall made of bricks and blocks of *tufa* alternately. Presently we stumble on the mouth of a well (4) at our right hand, protected by a low margin of the same kind of masonry. When we advance further, to the point marked 5, we are able to learn something of the date and history of the wall; for here it is partly broken down so that we can see behind it; and we find that this was not the first attempt that had been made to keep up the sand by means of solid masonry. Part of the more ancient wall and the bases of pillars by which its arches were supported still

Described.

remain *in situ* behind the later addition. Moreover, there are graves, with paintings and epitaphs, which the later wall entirely conceals; there is nothing, however, of an earlier date

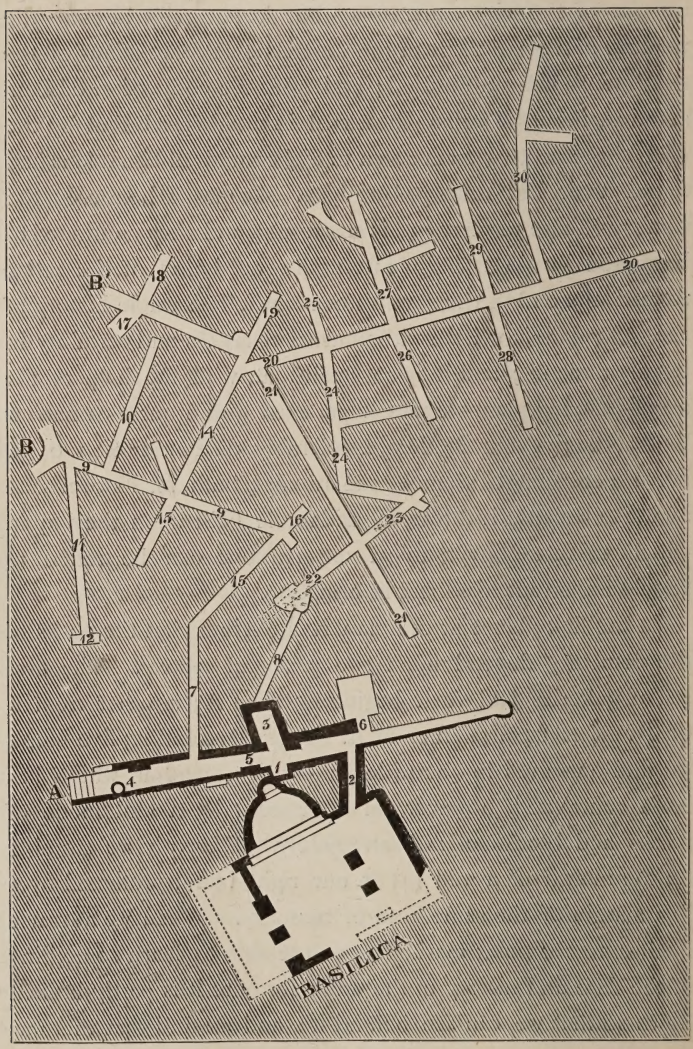


FIG. 25.—*Plan of Basilica and Cemetery of Generosa.*

than the reign of Diocletian. There is an *arcosolium*, not excavated in the usual way, because the nature of the rock

would not permit it, but built out into the pathway with bricks and tufa, which were plastered over and decorated at some time towards the end of the fourth century. There is the usual figure of a woman in prayer, probably the occupant of the tomb; of the Good Shepherd and (perhaps) of Abraham offering Isaac, together with other subjects which cannot even be conjectured. The Good Shepherd is the only figure which

FIG. 26.—*Fresco ornamenting an Arcosolium in Cemetery of Generosa.*

remains perfect. He is represented according to the later type; standing with the shepherd's pipe in his hand, and his tunic marked with the *crux gammata* (as it is called), an ornament which appears in the well-known figure of Diogenes the fossor, and on other monuments of the age of Damasus. Even the word PASTOR is written over his head—a most

unusual addition to any of the original decorations of the Catacombs,—and De Rossi believes that he can detect faint traces of the end of the name *Abraham* over the adjoining picture. No doubt also the name of the person to whom the tomb belonged was once written over the top of the arch; but unhappily, the plaster has perished here so completely that not a single letter can be seen. This is the more to be regretted, because it is the only private tomb in the whole of this cemetery which was decorated with painting; and its position so near to the martyrs suggests a doubt whether it was not likely to have belonged to some member of the family of the founder of the cemetery—Generosa.

We have already said that this *arcosolium* was not hewn out of the rock, but built up in the pathway, and the painting of the Good Shepherd covers one of the outer side walls. The front of the monument rested on the edge of a large gravestone fixed in the floor; and the second wall of the gallery rested on the other edge of the same stone. The stone marks the burial-place of an octogenarian lady, named Vincentia, who died on the 11th December 384, the very day on which Pope Damasus also died (*Vincentie benemerenti in pace, que vixit annos p. m. lxxx. exivit d. iii. Idus Decbre. Reqemdes*[1] *et Clearco Cons.*); and though the *arcosolium* and outer wall must needs be of later date, De Rossi does not think they were much later. He suggests that it may have been found necessary to add the wall in order to resist the pressure of the walls of Damasus's Basilica, as soon as it was completed.

Tomb of the martyrs.

Let us pass on to the chamber marked 3. This is the place where the paintings of the martyrs were found which have been already described, and where they were originally buried. It is not a regular *cubiculum* or crypt, but rather a shapeless recess in the rock, reduced to narrower proportions and to some sort of form by subsequent building. Their tomb was neither an ordinary shelf in the rock nor yet an *arcosolium*,

[1] For Ricemede.

but a monument constructed with slabs of marble against the wall on the left-hand side of the cavern; just such a tomb as the circumstances of their burial recorded in their Acts might have led us to expect. For the bodies had floated down the Tiber far beyond the limits within which the usual Christian cemeteries were situated; and, moreover, these had just now been closed and confiscated by the Government. Viatrix, therefore, and her assistants, buried them as best they could in the corner of an *arenarium*, close to the place where they had been found.

Up to this point all the galleries we have traversed have been passages of an *arenarium;* but the pathways marked 7 and 8 are of the ordinary cemeterial character. No. 7 was found in such a ruinous condition, that we must pass it over in silence. The walls of No. 8 also had fallen in in many places; in others, however, the graves remained untouched; they were closed with common tiles, and were almost entirely without inscriptions. The rare exceptions to this rule were of the simplest kind of epitaphs, apparently contemporaneous with the first beginnings of the cemetery. The same remark may be made on gallery 6; but we must not pass over so lightly the *cubiculum* which opens out of it.

Sepulchre of Florentius.

A very large slab, well inscribed with the words FLORENTIUS SIBI ET SUIS FECIT, serves to identify it as a private vault made by that gentleman for himself and his family; but it was abandoned before it was half filled, and another place of burial provided in its stead, underneath the pavement of the Basilica, where we read

FLORENTIUS SE VIVO
LOCUM SUIS FECIT.

At least the contiguity of place of these two monuments suggests a suspicion that they probably belonged to the same person, though it must be allowed that Florentius is not an uncommon name. But at any rate, it is quite certain that the usual number of graves was never made in the vault; on the contrary, for

some reason or other which we cannot now discover, it was filled with earth—perhaps the earth that was displaced in the making of the adjacent Basilica—and in this earth dead bodies were buried.

Peculiarities of sepulture.

It is to be noted also that two or three of the graves dug in the wall of the vault itself, and in which dead bodies had been laid, were yet never closed in the usual way, but remained open as in Etruscan and some other Pagan tombs. In one instance, the skeleton lay in the same exposed manner on a kind of bed of rock underneath a rude arch, as though in an unfinished *arcosolium*. The only other spot in the Catacombs where anything like this had been seen before was in a most ancient part (not far from the entrance) of the Cemetery of Domitilla.[1] There we seemed to recognise one of the earliest efforts of Christian fossors, before they had learnt freely to depart from the fashions of their ancestors, and to strike out an original mode of burial for themselves. But the same explanation is quite inadmissible here, and we can only conjecture that the chamber was for some unknown reason deserted, the empty area filled with earth, and the entrance carefully closed, whilst the family to whom it belonged received compensation by an assignment of a number of graves elsewhere.

We have now described the few chambers and galleries which are in the immediate neighbourhood of the Basilica, and which were dependent upon the entrance A, and it will be noticed that, like the principal galleries near all other subterranean shrines, so these also were carefully cut off from the rest of the excavation. The pilgrims were not to be allowed to lose their way, neither might they wander at will through the cemetery. If they entered at A, they would, after visiting the tombs, find their way into the Basilica; or, if they came from the Basilica, they would be guided to the open air again at A. On the map it would look as though the gallery No. 7 were an exception to this remark; but we cannot doubt that this also was in

[1] See page 125.

some way blocked up, and perhaps the ruins of the obstruction still encumber the path.

This gallery after a short distance is united with another (15) coming from the opposite direction. The principal gallery of this section of the cemetery is clearly No. 9, which starts from the *arenarium* at B, and has only a few short branches dependent upon it (9–16). If the first section we examined was poor and empty, the poverty of this is still more complete; there is not a single painting, nor a single inscription engraved on marble. One scratched in the fresh mortar round the edges of a grave (in 10) gives us the date 372. At 12 there is another *arcosolium*, built, not excavated; the plaster round some few of the common graves is marked with the Constantinian monogram between A and Ω, and many others have figures, or letters, or circles, or unintelligible cyphers scratched upon them in the same way, simply as a means of enabling the survivors to identify the tombs of their deceased relatives.

The graves at 17 are within the *arenarium* itself; the short galleries 18 and 19 were never used at all, and the main artery of this third division of the cemetery from B, together with all its dependencies (20–30), was clearly the latest, as it was also the meanest part of the whole. Though more extensive than the second division, and still more so than the first, it is absolutely void of inscriptions. The unlettered rustics who were buried here made marks with little rings of bone, bits of stone or marble, and in other rude and simple ways; but not one has left a name behind him, and the last portions of every gallery were never used at all. By this time the Basilica was being built, and those who could afford it provided graves for themselves within its precincts. The whole pavement was laid over graves, and every gravestone (with one exception) records that the grave had been procured during life, *se vivis fecerunt, &c.*

Peculiar nomenclature.

Another noteworthy circumstance about these graves is, that the owners of many of them appear with two names, the *nomen*

gentilitium as well as the *cognomen*—Elius Olympius, Elia Mallonia, Ispolitinus Florentius, Norvanus Herclanius, &c. In one of the more ancient cemeteries there would have been nothing strange in this; there we have seen numerous instances both of two names and of three.[1] But in the fourth century the fashion had changed, and although there are individual exceptions in which it was retained, we know of no other class of monuments of so late a date of which it is a general characteristic. Here, however, it occurs too frequently to be accounted for by mere individual caprice; the motive must have been one which affected a whole class, and De Rossi shrewdly conjectures that it may have been adopted by these local magnates by way of distinction from the *plebs sine nomine* among whom they lived and near whom they were buried. It is perhaps no slight confirmation of this conjecture that they were not members of the real old Roman aristocracy who showed themselves thus jealous of their rank. In half the cases the name of the *gens* is only spurious, not the name of any old Roman family of the days of the Republic, but a pseudo-gentilitial name derived from the birthplace of the holder, *e.g.*, Spoletanus from Spoleto, Nurbanus or Norvanus (three times) from Norba.

History of this cemetery.

We said that one of the inscriptions in the Basilica was a real epitaph, not a mere mode of declaring, whilst yet alive, the right to be buried in a particular grave when dead. This solitary exception was at the foot of the steps immediately before the apse, and it deserves examination. It records the death and burial of one Elius Olimpius, in the summer of 382. Then, after a vacant space, there follows on the same stone another record of the death and burial of his daughter Elia Mallonia, towards the end of November, 394. Finally, we read, *Locum a fundamentibus marmore ab i*[mo fecit et] *ad adornavit socero et conjugi sue Victor* . . . Observe the date of the first death upon this stone, A.D. 382. This was the very year

[1] See pages 114, 116, 120.

in which Gratian ordered the confiscation of all property belonging to heathen temples. This Basilica, therefore, could not have been built before that time, for it stands within the grove of the Fratres Arvales. But the first moment that it was possible, Pope Damasus erected at the cost of this Victor . . . a public monument of the victory of the martyrs and of the Christian faith in a place that had heretofore been sacred to rites of idolatry; and in reward for his generosity, Victor . . . obtained the right to bury his wife and his father-in-law in the most coveted place, nearest to the tombs of the martyrs.

Thus we have in this Catacomb an epitome, as it were, of the whole general history of the Catacombs compressed within very narrow chronological limits. We have its hurried beginning in times of difficulty, at the very commencement of the fourth century; its continued use in times of peace; its partial transformation and decoration by Pope Damasus, for the sake of the martyrs who lay in it; then, burial within Damasus's Basilica; next, the growth of a non-subterranean cemetery above and around it; and finally, the translation of the relics and complete abandonment of the place before the end of the seventh century; for we have already said that Leo II. removed the bodies in the year 683. This is one of the very earliest instances of such a translation; and the reason of it may have been its great distance from the city, and its specially exposed situation on the road which led from Porto, a place the possession of which had been keenly coveted and hotly contended for by the various hostile armies, who from the year 408 continually succeeded one another, bringing ever worse and worse ruin upon the doomed city. After the translation, it would seem that the cemetery was carefully closed. We can see the opening that was made in the tomb to effect the withdrawal of the bodies; then there is no token of its having been visited again till our own day.

We have said more than enough to settle beyond all

Extinction of the Fratres Arvales.

dispute De Rossi's identification of this cemetery. Yet there remains one grave difficulty which requires explanation. At first sight it would have seemed almost incredible that the Christians should have dared to penetrate beneath a wood belonging to a Pagan *collegium*, and to have buried their dead there in the days of Diocletian. But the truth is, that we have every reason to believe that the *collegium* of the Fratres Arvales had from some cause or other either been suppressed before that time, or else incorporated into some other religious sodality. When Marini first published his work upon their tablets, he expressed an earnest hope that tablets of a later date would one day be discovered; for those that he had had an opportunity of seeing did not come beyond the first quarter of the third century. Not one of those which have now come to light belongs to any later date. Moreover, the Emperor Gordian, who reigned about this time (A.D. 240), is the last upon whose statue the title of *Frater Arvalis* is enumerated among the other imperial titles; neither does it appear as belonging to any other public magistrate after this time, neither is it named by any later author. So many coincidences seem to warrant the conclusion we have mentioned, and which De Rossi published to the world in 1858. The new discovery in 1866 may be said to set the seal of certainty upon it; for we could hardly account for finding a Christian cemetery in this place unless the college had been virtually suppressed and its property abandoned. It has been already remarked that in 382 Gratian ordered the confiscation of all property belonging to the heathen places of worship; but he did not abrogate the decrees of his predecessors (which were also renewed more than once by his successors), that the buildings should be preserved in their integrity.[1] Pope Damasus appears scrupulously to have followed the rule laid down in this discriminating legislation. When he built a Basilica, he destroyed—or at least there was destroyed, and it

St. Damasus preserved heathen temples, but destroyed the altars.

[1] "Ædificiorum sit integritas."—*Cod. Theod.*, xvi. 10, 18.

has been found buried in the earth outside—the round altar, adorned with the usual carvings of festoons and of the skulls of oxen and a serpent (the *genius loci* to whom sacrifices were offered), and the head of the serpent was (probably on purpose) defaced and broken; but he did not touch, so far as we can ascertain, the tablets that were affixed to the walls of the temple, and therefore (we may be sure) not the temple itself. The tablets that have been found used for gravestones were the coverings of graves later than the time of Damasus; graves belonging to the non-subterranean cemetery, which were made probably in the sixth century, during the troubled times of the wars against the Goths. Of the wise moderation of Pope Damasus himself we have an interesting illustration in an incident in the life of Symmachus, to which De Rossi has been the first to call attention in connection with this subject, and with which we will conclude our abridgment of his account of the Cemetery of Generosa.

Symmachus was prefect of the city, A.D. 384, and he was denounced to the Emperors as having abused his official power in the interests of Paganism, to which he remained obstinately attached. The occasion of the charge was this: Prætextatus, the military prefect, or prefect of the Prætorium, himself also an ardent champion of Paganism, had obtained an imperial rescript authorising criminal proceedings to be instituted against those who had exceeded the limits assigned in the law of Gratian, and plundered the marble facings or mutilated the marble ornaments of heathen temples. The execution of this commission had been intrusted to Symmachus, who, however, shrunk at first from undertaking it, foreseeing probably the charge of unjust persecution to which it might expose him. But his forbearance was not allowed to shield him. He was accused of having imprisoned priests and bishops, and tortured others of the faithful, for supposed violation of the imperial laws on this subject; and he received a peremptory order to release all the Christians, and especially

all clerics, whom he might hold imprisoned on this charge.

His letter to Symmachus.

In reply, Symmachus appealed to the Romans generally, but especially to a letter of Pope Damasus, in which he had denied that any injustice whatever had been done to the professors of the Christian faith: he acknowledged that some Christians were in prison for various offences against the laws, but certainly not for anything which was involved in the practice of the Christian law (*variorum criminum reos, sed a ministerio Christianæ legis alienos*). On a subsequent occasion, Damasus was amongst the foremost of the opponents of Symmachus when he sought to restore the altar of Victory, which had been removed from the senate-house; he sent to the Emperors the protest of the Christian senators against this partial re-establishment of Paganism, and wrote to St. Ambrose to urge him to use his influence in support of their petition. But this was a very different thing from allowing the heathen temples to stand as architectural and historical monuments. Here he was ready to co-operate even with the heathen magistrates, and what we can see for ourselves in the Cemetery of Generosa, taken in connection with the letter quoted by Symmachus, shows how sincere and generous that co-operation was. He had a true love for the fine arts, as well as an enthusiastic devotion to the memory and relics of the martyrs.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FOSSORS.

Pictures and epitaphs of the Fossors—Men of talent and skill amongst them—Their method of working—Their great devotedness—Their place among the clergy—They were maintained by the Church—In fourth and fifth centuries they seem to have sold the graves in the Catacombs—Particulars of the sale recorded on monuments, probably also registered elsewhere—The price varies much, but is always high.

Pictures and epitaphs of the fossors.

THE closing years of the Pontificate of Damasus bring us very near the time when the Catacombs ceased to be used as the Christian cemeteries of Rome; but we must not leave this first and most important period of their history without giving some account of the *fossores*, the heroic band of workmen by whom these stupendous excavations were made. Their figures appear not unfrequently, and certainly not undeservedly, among the decorations of the subterranean chambers. Moreover, we have several epitaphs recording the places of burial of themselves or their wives and children. Perhaps the earliest representation of them is to be seen in the Cemetery of Callixtus, in paintings which are not later than the beginning of the third century. In one of these chambers they stand with pickaxe on shoulder, the special *insigne* of their office, and have the tunic loose. In another, the tunic is girt about their loins and they are already at work, beginning to make an opening in the rock as yet apparently untouched. Elsewhere, we see them with a lamp, either carried in the hand or fastened to the wall, and with other instruments of their profession around them, such as hatchet and hammer,

R.S., ii. tav. xvii. xviii.

chisel and compasses, as in the well-known picture of Diogenes, which ornamented the principal *arcosolium* of a chamber of the Cemetery of Domitilla, towards the end of the fourth century, in which he seems to be represented as if just about to descend into the subterranean vaults. He is evidently a master-fossor, so to speak. The form and decoration of his tomb, as well as some of the instruments which lie around him, are certain proofs that he occupied a higher rank than that of a mere digger of graves. He stands beside an apsed building, doubtless one of the small *basilicæ* erected in the cemeteries; and it

Men of talent and skill amongst them.

FIG. 27.—*Diogenes the Fossor.*

is quite possible that this feature is introduced into the picture by way of intimating that he himself had been its designer. For in an authentic document of the Diocletian persecution we find one of the fossors, in answer to the interrogatory of the heathen magistrate, calling himself an *artifex;* and many reasons combine to make it probable that both the painters, and sculptors, the engravers, and any other artists employed in the Catacombs belonged in some way to this section of the

Church's officers. It is an inference of Le Blant's,[1] from the frequency of fossors' epitaphs, as compared with the paucity of those of acolytes, lectors, or exorcists, that the fossors were probably the men who engraved these monuments; and the presence of a chisel and compasses among Diogenes's instruments gives some countenance to the conjecture.

Their method of working.

The compasses suggest also another question. How was the plan of each Catacomb designed, and by whom? Was the plan of the excavations determined and a map drawn before the work was begun? For it is clear that the work was not done at random, nor by mere unskilled labour. So vast and intricate a network of galleries, on different levels, with chambers of various sizes in each, and staircases leading from one to the other, could not have been executed with that perfect order and regularity which we so much admire, without the guidance of a practised head and hand, so that Michele de Rossi does not hesitate to say that the master-fossor must have been a professional *mensor*, or civil engineer. He considers it to have been established by the works of modern German archæologists, that there were preserved in the Roman archives plans of all the cities of the empire; and in particular, that there were plans (*formæ*) of all the public and private buildings of Rome itself, of its baths, temples, streets, and aqueducts, &c.; and there is reason to believe that these were engraved on metal. The plan of the area of a grand heathen sepulchre was found, engraved on marble, in a Catacomb on the Via Lavicana, and may still be seen in the Museum at Urbino; on it are marked with great accuracy both the position and shape of the monument, the house of its *custode*, and the garden, the private roads, the ditch, and plots of ground covered with reeds, which formed part of the property. Other plans of the same kind are described by Frontinus and other ancient authors, evidently from the originals, and M. de Rossi says he cannot doubt that similar plans were executed of each

[1] Inscriptions Chrétiennes de la Gaule, ii. 192.

area that was granted for a Christian cemetery. He considers that this would have been necessary for legal security; on the other hand, he does not think that the fossors need have prepared a plan of the subterranean excavation they intended to make; for although it seems marvellous to us, as we thread our way through the labyrinth of galleries now connected with one another, how they could have been made so close to one another yet without confusion, nevertheless (he remarks very truly) this wonder is much diminished when we learn to distinguish the several areas, originally separate, and each of comparatively moderate dimensions. His close observation of every detail of the work enables him to detect the *modus operandi*, which was really simple enough, and borrowed from the old Roman plan of making a camp or laying out a new city.

Working plan of a catacomb.

As soon as the area was determined upon, an opening was made either in the centre or at one end of its frontage line; and when the staircase had reached its proper depth, a gallery was cut straight to the limit of their property, and then another gallery at right angles with this, reaching, in like manner, to the extreme limits to which the Christian excavators were at liberty to go. When these two fundamental lines had been made, which corresponded to the *decumanus* and the *cardo* of ordinary Roman measurements, the subsequent stages of the work were easy; other parallel lines (*decumanus major et minor*) might be added, and the intervening spaces filled up with greater freedom.

In parts where this plan has not been observed, in areas of irregular shape or not having staircases of their own, M. de Rossi observes that the work seems to have been guided by more frequent points of communication with the outer world; not large square *luminaria*, such as are found over the principal chapels, but small circular shafts, just sufficient to facilitate the removal of the soil; but in the earlier and more important areas he assures us that he finds indisputable proof in the chronological succession of the graves that the first point

aimed at was to reach the most distant point of the area which had been taken possession of, and to fix its precise limits. The traces of this plan of development are much obscured in our maps by the intrusion of later excavations, of galleries connecting adjoining areas, and walls to support buildings above ground or to hinder free circulation below. But it can still be recognised without difficulty both in the first area of Callixtus, the area which includes the tomb of Eusebius, and the several areas of St. Soteris. It will be seen elsewhere also, and yet more clearly, when we set forth in detail the testimony of the Catacombs to the mode of their construction and development.

Their zeal and devotedness.

But the work of the fossors not only required technical skill and ability in the head that planned them, it also required strength and patience, courage and devotedness, in the men who executed. Theirs was emphatically a hard and laborious life, and hence in the imperial laws of the fourth and fifth centuries they are called by a name which seems to have been derived from this feature of their lives. They are called *Copiatæ* (κοπιαται), or labourers *par excellence;* and there are even one or two Roman inscriptions in which their work is believed to have been similarly described. One in the Cœmeterium Ostrianum was to the memory of *Debestus Montanarius qui laboravit per omnium climiterium;* and De Rossi having met with a similar corruption of the word *cœmeterium* elsewhere, reads this as equivalent to "having laboured throughout the whole cemetery." Their ordinary title, however, in all the epitaphs of the Catacombs, is *fossor* or *fossarius.*

Their life was also one of continual danger and self-sacrifice. It was no mere venal service which they rendered to the Church, but a work of real devotedness, which might expose them to the risk of martyrdom; and hence we find it recorded to the praise of a Greek convert from Paganism that he gave up his whole life to the work. Moreover, they were necessarily in the confidence of the Church's rulers; they knew the

exact place of burial of each martyr and holy confessor, the times and places appointed for the celebration of the holy mysteries, the clue that would guide a man aright to the particular spot he desired to visit, and every other particular. We are not surprised, therefore, to hear, on the authority of St. Jerome, or at least of a work that was formerly attributed to that author, that they were numbered among the clergy; and although they are not mentioned in the list of Roman clerics that was sent to St. Cyprian about A.D. 240, yet we find them enumerated in an official document of the first decade of the fourth century, in which they appear immediately after the bishop, priests, deacons, and sub-deacons. This document is the authentic act whereby the authorities of a Christian church in Africa gave up all their possessions to the Pagan magistrates in obedience to Diocletian's decree of the year 303. It has no special connection with a cemetery, for it was drawn up "in the house in which the Christians used to meet" after their church had been destroyed; and yet, as we have said, it is recorded that at least seven fossors, perhaps even more, were present at the making of the inventory, together with the bishop, four priests, three deacons, and four sub-deacons. Of the lectors, it is expressly stated that they were at their own homes or had hidden away; but the fossors were there, and not present as mere idle spectators, but as important officials; for, in the course of the perquisition, it is from them that the Pagan officers specially make inquiries about the furniture of the house, and from them that they receive it, whilst for more sacred things, such as copies of the Holy Scriptures, they turn to the higher orders of the clergy.[1]

Their place among the clergy.

This history gives some support to a conjecture which has been made, and which certainly has strong antecedent probability, viz., that the fossors were, in fact, the *ostiarii* of those days, or at least formed a part of that body. As long as the

[1] This document will be found in Volume II., in the chapter on "Objects found in the Catacombs."

Christian places of worship were in the cemeteries, whether under ground or above, the functions of the fossors and the *ostiarii*, even if they were divided into two separate classes, must have been in part identical. Moreover, this conjecture would explain the apparent absence of the fossors from the list of persons furnished by Pope Cornelius who received their daily bread from the treasury of the Church, which yet the fossors must certainly have done : we may suppose them to be included in the *ostiarii*. Finally, a Greek inscription, apparently of the second or third century, distinctly identifies the τοποφυλαξ, or *custode*, and the φοσσορ as one and the same person, assigning him a small sum in payment for looking after a particular grave. In opposition to this, it must be acknowledged that in another document of the sixth century, reciting the various orders of clerics, the fossor and the *ostiarius* are both mentioned, and the former is put between the latter and the *lector*.

They were maintained by the Church.

R.S., iii. 432.

However, be the true explanation of these discrepancies what it may, we cannot doubt that during the earliest ages of the Church, the fossors were supported, like the rest of her ministers, by the voluntary gifts of the faithful ; for the work of the Catacombs was carried on by means of the spontaneous liberality of the whole body of Christians, not by any fixed tax exacted for each grave that was required. Wealthy individuals may have provided special vaults for the interment of themselves and their families, such as M. Aurelius Restitutus, Bythus, Florentius, and others, whose inscriptions to that effect have been already quoted ; but, as a general rule, rich and poor, noble and simple, were buried in the same fashion, and their graves mingled indiscriminately along the walls of the galleries. This is in accordance both with express statements of Christian writers and testimony rendered by the epitaphs themselves. There is no record before the time of Constantine of the purchase of a Christian grave ; and very few instances indeed in which it is stated that a particular grave had been

secured for this or that individual during his lifetime. Indeed such an appropriation would have seriously interfered with the free progress of the excavation, and entirely prevented that convenient and economical practice which we find was so often followed, viz., of depositing in some of the common galleries, the walls of which had been already filled with graves, the soil that was displaced in the making of other galleries, and even of burying in the soil thus loosely deposited.

In the fourth and fifth centuries they sold graves in the Catacombs.

Towards the end of the fourth century, however, and still more in the fifth, we learn from the monuments which have come down to us that the fossors had become almost the owners of the Catacombs, at least they treated directly with those who wished to purchase graves in them, and sold them at what seems to us to be a very high price. Nor is there any indication that in these transactions they were only the agents of others. It is not said, for example, that the contracts were made and the graves excavated *jussu* or *conscientiâ* of the Pope or of anybody else; but one or more fossors sell absolutely, sometimes in the presence of others of their own order as witnesses, *præsentiâ Severi foss. et Laurenti*,[1] sometimes without this formality, but never (as far as appears) in subordination to the clergy. Once, the fossor who had dug the grave being dead, even his descendants were allowed to sell it.

AUR EXSUPERANTIUS COSTAT ME
EMISSE A FOSSORIS DISCINDENTIB.[2]

Particulars of sale recorded on monuments.

The earliest example which we have of the purchase of a grave belongs to the time of Pope Liberius (352–366), but the stone is so mutilated that we can learn no particulars of this sale; it is not even certain that they were recorded. But from the year 391 there is such a continual series of monuments recording purchases, that De Rossi thinks some distinct innovation in the matter must have been sanctioned, or at

[1] Marini, Arvali, p. 695. [2] Lateran Museum, x. No. 30.

least tolerated, under the Pontificate of Siricius, the successor of Damasus. We have one example in the year 391, one in 392, three in 397, two in 400, and again in 403, &c. It will be observed that these examples belong to the very last years during which the Catacombs were used for purposes of burial, and they are found, therefore, only in the latest subterranean galleries. In the pavements of the Basilicas built over the Catacombs, and in the non-subterranean cemeteries formed round those Basilicas, these records continue in great number to the end of the sixth century, and even into the seventh. The name of the purchaser is, of course, always recorded on these monuments, sometimes also of the vendor; and till nearly the middle of the fifth century this is always one or more of the fossors. After 438, however, there is no instance of this; that title disappears altogether from Christian monuments, and towards the end of the century we find the purchases being made from the *præpositus*, or from a *mansionarius sub conscientiâ presbyteri.*

Probably registered also elsewhere.

The inscriptions do not usually specify in what cemetery or in what part of the cemetery the newly purchased grave has been acquired; and there was no necessity for such specification, since the stone in its own place would speak for itself. There are numerous exceptions to this rule, however, when the purchaser had been fortunate enough to secure a grave near the tomb of some martyr, *ad Sanctum Cornelium*, *ad Ippolitum*, *ad Domnum Gaium*, *in cryptâ novâ retro sanctos*, &c.; and sometimes also when there was no such privilege to boast of; as, for instance, "under a luminare in the Catacomb" at St. Sebastian's, another "in a new crypt on the left-hand side," "in the crypt of Damasus," "of Callixtus," &c. Nevertheless there must needs have been a register of these purchases kept somewhere for regularity's sake, and to secure the purchasers against disputes, and the following inscription would seem to promise to tell us where to look for the register, had it not

unfortunately been broken off just at the most important point:[1]—

LOCUM VICENTI
QUEM CUMPARA
VIT CUM SUIS SI
QUI VOLUERIT REQUI
RERE VENIAT IN CLE

"The grave of Vincentius, which he bought with his own money [or more probably, for his own burial and that of his relations]. If any one wishes to see [the deed of purchase], let him come to—"

In ordinary civil life, the offices for the custody of public or private deeds for the notaries were called *stationes;* here the only letters which remain (CLE) may possibly have been intended to denote some cemetery,[2] or it may have been the beginning of a man's name. Another inscription bearing on this subject has been found in the Basilica of St. Petronilla in the Cemetery of Domitilla.

VII CALENDAS FEBRARAS EGO AU
R CONSTANTIUS SCRIPSI PRO AUR B
ICTURINA EUM VENDIDISSE LOC
UM QUEM ESSIT AUR LAUREN

"On the 26th January, I, Aurelius Constantius, have written for Aurelius Victorinus that he has sold a grave which Aurelius Laurentius has bought."

This business-like document, which seems to record a transfer of property in a single grave between different members of the same family, is, in fact, the summary of the contract, such as was wont to be written on the outside of the deed, whilst the whole document remained shut up in the inner pages of the wax tablets of the diptych on which it was inscribed. Pompeii has lately surrendered to us the memorandum-book of one of its bankers, one L. Cæcilius Jucundus, in which there are scores of entries almost identical in form with this which

[1] Corp. Ins. Lat., iii. 925.

[2] See page 209.

was engraved on stone in the Catacombs—*Ego A. B. mandatu* [or *rogatu*] *C. D. scripsi eum accepisse ab L. Cæcilio Jucundo sestertios* [tot] *nummos.* "I, A. B., at the bidding or request of C. D., have written that he has received from his banker so much money." There is the same savour of official or semi-official character about nearly all these monuments. Some of them begin with the word *constat*, which was the regular legal term in the fourth and fifth centuries at the beginning of all contracts, corresponding pretty nearly to our own "*This indenture showeth.*" And De Rossi observes that hardly one of them is incised like a regular monumental epitaph, but merely scribbled, almost in cursive characters, as if it were a mere business memorandum.

The price paid uncertain, but always high.

It should be mentioned, also, that, in some eight or ten instances, the price of these graves is specified, varying from one golden *solidus* and a half to six golden *solidi.* It is not easy to account for this considerable variation of prices. It is much too considerable to be explained by the different value of the precious metals at different times which were not really so very far apart; neither was it the result of increasing covetousness, the fruit of an unholy traffic in holy things; for the place that was most sought after, and accounted most holy, was sold at the lowest price: a grave *ante domnam Emeritam* for a *solidus* and a half. And even this lowest price was out of proportion with the real cost. Thirty shillings or more was a high price to pay for a single grave, when two men could certainly have made eight or ten such graves in the course of a day. We can only conclude with De Rossi that there was no fixed market-price, so to speak, for these purchases, but that the payment was proportioned in each case to the fortune and generosity of the purchaser, whose superfluous wealth was thus made to supply for the indigence of others in an important work of charity. In what precise way this was effected, what proportion of the purchase-money was

given over to the common purse of the Church during the short period that such purchases were made, and during which (as we have said) the Catacombs seem to have been entirely in the hands of the fossors, we cannot tell; but we know that the practice of paying for a place of burial became so inveterate in the Christian community, that St. Gregory the Great, though himself disliking it, was yet unable to put a stop to it.

CHAPTER VIII.

CESSATION OF BURIALS IN THE CATACOMBS.

Use of the Catacombs as burial-places interfered with by cemeteries made above ground before the middle of fourth century—Superseded by them before A.D. 410*—These points of chronology a new discovery—How ascertained by De Rossi in the Cemetery of St. Callixtus, first by means of the dated inscriptions, then of the undated, then of other criteria.*

Burials in the Catacombs less frequent after 340.

IT has been intimated more than once that with the end of the fourth century or the beginning of the fifth we have come to the end of the history of the Catacombs, considered as the ordinary Christian cemeteries of Rome. But this is a statement which, to some of our readers, will require confirmation. They will have heard or read of epitaphs, professedly found in the Catacombs, bearing date of a later age; and they will want to know why these epitaphs are ignored and their apparently irrefragable testimony entirely set at nought. The truth is, that never till our own time was any attention paid to those cemeteries above ground which have been spoken of, and which were made immediately over the site of the principal Catacombs. If a stone was found in the Catacombs, it was taken for granted that this was its proper home, and that it had originally been used to close one of the graves in this subterranean world; and yet in many instances its size and weight ought to have warned its discoverers that it never could have been so placed. The more cautious and scientific methods pursued to-day establish beyond all doubt that these later monuments originally belonged to graves dug underneath the pavement, or round the outer walls of the Basilicas above

ground, which, during the lapse of more than a thousand years, have fallen into the Catacombs below.

It has been mentioned before, upon the evidence furnished by inscriptions bearing dates, that from A.D. 338 to A.D. 364 two out of three burials were still in the subterranean cemeteries, but that during the remainder of the century (with a very short exception) the proportions were reversed. We have attributed the exception to the influence of Pope Damasus, who devoted so much care and diligence to the restoration of the Catacombs (so to call it). We are disposed to attribute it to the action of the same sovereign Pontiff that this temporary return to the subterranean mode of burial was not maintained. We know that his devotion to the Catacombs was well-regulated and discreet; and it is quite possible that he may have seen cause to prohibit, or at least very seriously to discourage, the general use of them. At any rate, the evidence of the dated inscriptions makes it clear that, for some cause or other, they were very sparingly used during the last quarter of the century, and after the first decade of the next century hardly used at all.

Revived in 370.

After the year 409, we are not sure that a single example can be found of burial in the Catacombs, except as a special privilege granted to the remains of certain bishops or martyrs brought from foreign countries under the pressure of persecution. After the year 426 there is no mention of the fossors. All the liturgical works of the fifth century, in their prayers for the dead and the formulas for the blessing of tombs, speak of tombs in or near Basilicas; they say nothing of burial in the Catacombs. Nor is it difficult to assign a reason for this abandonment of those venerable places. In the year 410, "that fatal year," to use the language of St. Jerome, "the brightest light of all the world was put out; the Roman empire lost its head; and, to speak more truly, in one city the whole world perished."[1] Rome was taken by Alaric; the citizens were

Ceased altogether in A.D. 409.

[1] Hieron., Proleg. in lib. i. Ezech. v. 16, ed. Migne.

reduced, many by slaughter, some by captivity, all by loss of wealth, and there was neither time nor means to do more than what was absolutely necessary for the burial of the dead. It is possible that, as the work of excavation proceeds, it may be found necessary to make some slight modification of these statements when applying them to particular localities. There may have been local peculiarities, such as the neighbourhood of a popular Basilica or special devotion to some particular subterranean shrine, which may have brought into fashion now this, now that, mode of burial in preference to the other; but De Rossi unhesitatingly expresses his conviction that no future discovery will materially change the outlines of the chronological sketch that has here been given.

Chronology of the Catacombs a new subject.

Every student even moderately acquainted with the literature of the subject is well aware that no scientific attempt to fix the true chronology of the Catacombs had ever been made before our own times. Indeed, nothing is more disappointing, in studying older works on Christian archæology, than to note the neglect of this essential point. Important monuments are copiously illustrated and explained with accurate and varied learning, but are left in a state of hopeless vagueness as to their date, and therefore as to their *rapports* with history, with the development of the Christian society, its fortunes, its arts, and its whole condition, both external and internal. And yet the real value of the monument, perhaps its very meaning, depends on a knowledge of these things. De Rossi, on the other hand, is never tired of repeating that he looks upon this as the real foundation of the new studies of Christian monuments and inscriptions, and that "the precise dates which, from an attentive chronological examination, he continues to collect with persevering industry and scrupulous conscientiousness, are perhaps the newest and most valuable part of the contribution which he hopes to make to Christian archæology."

His mode of procedure is most laborious, but its results are so important that it will be worth while to study it some-

How treated by De Rossi.

what closely. The main secret of its success may be said to be its scrupulous attention to topography. Thanks to the intelligent and indefatigable assistance of his brother, a practical mathematician and a geologist, he has been able to obtain a complete analysis of each subterranean excavation, so far as it has been explored, of all the chambers and galleries on the various levels, of the staircases or other means of communication between them, and even the measurement of thousands upon thousands of the graves. He has himself scrupulously registered, not only every monument, written or engraved, and every painting, but even every mark and scratch which his own keen observation, or the still more lynx-eyed vigilance of some of his younger assistants, has been able to detect upon the walls. He has marked every stone, and even every fragment of every stone, bearing so much as a single letter or symbol upon it, and taken note of the precise spot where it was found. And for a very long time he confined himself to the mere registration of these facts without combining them, lest, as he says, some premature effort of this kind should tempt him to form a system which would so occupy his mind as to render it less open to impressions from other facts that might be discovered later, and offer some apparent contradiction to the system too hastily adopted. By and by the time came when he must needs examine his accumulation of facts, compare them one with another, and draw deductions from them; and that he has made those deductions truly and wisely, a daily increasing experience has set beyond a doubt. Often, indeed, there was scarcely need for any process of deduction at all; it was a subject of real wonder to himself to see how spontaneously light and order seemed to come out of apparent chaos, simply by an intelligent gaze upon the vast mass of data, so minute and so scrupulously exact, which his extraordinary zeal and patience during more than a quarter of a century had succeeded in bringing together. And now, though new discoveries are continually being made, which may sometimes

oblige him to make a correction on some matter of historical or topographical detail, yet they invariably confirm the main outlines of the chronological system he has propounded; every new fact that is really ascertained and settled finds its place in that system at once and without difficulty. He may have been obliged, as he somewhere laments, "to make a very long route indeed to reach his conclusion, and to undertake a minute and immense analysis which had discouraged all who had gone before him," but the end has been gained at last, and the labour has been abundantly compensated. The system of "studying the inscriptions, the paintings, and the sculptures, not separately, nor according to a classification predetermined upon, but in their original positions, and considered in their relations to one another," has achieved results which the whole learned world has admired and accepted.

System explained in the instance of St. Callixtus.

The only extensive cemetery of which De Rossi has yet published a tolerably complete analysis is that of Callixtus, to the examination of which our next Book will be devoted; but we will anticipate here some few of the details, so far as they bear upon the question which has given rise to this digression, viz., how late the practice of burial in the Catacombs was continued. In the upper division, so to call it, of that cemetery—we mean in the cemetery above ground—there have been found about two thousand inscriptions or fragments of inscriptions, and a still larger number have been recovered from the subterranean Catacomb. Add to these some eight hundred more which De Rossi has not seen with his own eyes, but of which his predecessors have left a written record, and we may say, speaking roughly, that he has five thousand inscriptions or fragments of inscriptions from this single cemetery. Among the non-subterranean inscriptions there are about fifty with consular dates, concerning which there can be no dispute, and perhaps about half as many more which might be made the subject of discussion. We need not enter into particulars about these, since they would not prolong the use of the Cata-

combs a single decade of years. But setting aside one doubtful inscription (which, if admitted, would carry back the earliest non-subterranean date to the year 337), we find that the rest begin with the year 358, and then continue from 366 to 542, or possibly 565; that is to say, these inscriptions give certain evidence that the cemetery above ground was in use for rather more than two centuries, from the middle of the fourth to the middle of the sixth.

It must be noted, however, that these dated inscriptions are not distributed equally during the several parts of this period; they are much more numerous in the latter half of the fourth century and the first half of the fifth than at any other time. In the first half of the sixth they become very rare indeed, only four or five in fifty years, and after the middle of the sixth they cease altogether. A cemetery lately discovered on the Esquiline, and other intramural cemeteries exhibiting the same dates, abundantly account for this complete cessation; they prove that there was at that time a further change in the manner of Christian burial in Rome. As in the beginning of the fifth century the Catacombs were abandoned for cemeteries above them, so by the middle of the sixth century suburban cemeteries were deserted altogether, and the practice of burial within the walls became common. But with this we are not at present concerned.

Burial in suburban cemeteries ceases after middle of sixth century.

Let us now descend into the subterranean parts of the Cemetery of Callixtus, and see what chronological data may be gathered there. We shall learn in the next Book that there are still to be seen there the original epitaphs of several of the Popes of the third century, and other dated inscriptions, about forty in number, between the years 300 and 407, three-fourths of them falling within the last fifty years of the period. As, then, there is no proof from the inscriptions of the upper cemetery that it was ever used before the days of Constantine, so there is no proof from those of the lower that it was ever

used after the days of Attila; and the latest inscription, A.D. 407, was found in one of the very latest galleries.

Such is the conclusion to be drawn from this first element in the reconstruction of the chronology of the Roman Christian cemeteries; and De Rossi tells us that it corresponds exactly with all that he has been able to discover from more partial examinations of the same kind in other Roman cemeteries. In the cemetery, for instance, over the Catacomb at San Lorenzo, all the monuments range from A.D. 382 to 538; so also at St. Paul's and elsewhere. All both begin and end more or less at the same time; not one of them apparently remained in use so late as the seventh century.

Same results obtained from the undated inscriptions.

But we must next inquire into the testimony given by the other and more numerous class of inscriptions, those that are without any consular dates. These too De Rossi distributes as far as he can topographically; that is to say, he collects all the stones that have been found within a given area, and first divides them into three classes—those which have evidently fallen through the *luminaria*, or in some other way been introduced from the upper world; those which beyond all question belong to the subterranean excavation, many of them never having been detached from their original sites; and finally, those about which there is some reason to suspect, either from their size, their shape, or some other cause, that they may have come from outside, but nothing is known with certainty. Next, he repeats precisely the same process with reference to the stones that have been found above ground; for among these, too, there is sometimes a certain admixture of intruders, which in the course of the last three hundred years have been brought up from below, and a few, perhaps, the place of whose origin must always remain doubtful. Having thus divided his mass of materials into six groups, he proceeds to the most minute examination of them all with reference to their language, whether Latin or Greek; their symbols, monograms, or other ornaments; the form of their letters; peculiarities of grammar

or spelling; names, style, and epigraphic *formulæ*. Finally, he compares them all, with reference to the same particulars, with all the dated inscriptions he has been able to discover; and, that he may not be misled by any preconceived theory, he makes these the real test and standard of his whole system.

We need not dilate upon the wearisome laboriousness of this process of examination. De Rossi himself occasionally gives utterance to a pathetic lament as to the dry and tedious character of the task thus imposed upon him; and those who have really made a conscientious study of the three volumes of his "Roma Sotterranea" will have had their share in the same labour and the same lamentation. We would not willingly give our readers occasion to feel the same, and shall therefore confine ourselves to setting before them a brief summary of the conclusions which have been arrived at.

Proofs of this in detail.

R.S., ii. 554, *et seq.*

In the cemeteries above ground we can find no marks of primitive antiquity; no epitaphs having three names, according to classical usage; rarely even a second name, the name of the *gens;* or if it be, only of those that were in common use in the later period, *e.g.*, the Flavii, Aurelii, &c. Some of the names are essentially Christian—Joannes, Deusdedit, and the like. There is not a single Christian acclamation of the old primitive simplicity, but rhetorical praises and bad imitations of the poems of Damasus, or mere historical facts, such as the dates of the death or burial, the length of life, the purchase of the grave, and so forth; not a single old Christian symbol, such as the fish, or the anchor, no disguised form of the Cross, but the plain, bold monogram, in one or other of its forms; a few notices of civil or military offices and dignities, and all of them such as may be read in the "Notitia Dignitatum" of the fifth century. In a word, everything combines to fix the date of the beginning of this kind of cemetery in Rome as not earlier than the middle of the fourth century, and there is nothing to show that it continued in use beyond the middle of the sixth.

On the other hand, a similar examination of the chronological tokens of the subterranean cemeteries reveals that they began indeed at various periods, according to the special circumstances of the history of each, but that they all fell into disuse about the same time, the beginning of the fifth century. In one and all of them there is an entire absence of everything belonging to the sixth century or the latter half of the fifth, whilst there are abundant tokens of the second, third, and fourth. The days of the month are always computed by Kalends, Nones, and Ides, not by mere numerical succession, as in the sixth century; the features of civil society which are accidentally revealed to us are all of the first four centuries, none later; the writing, the symbols, the seals stamped on the mortar, are all of the same date; if three names are not found (as in the oldest part of the cemeteries they usually are), yet the names of the *gens* are not wanting; the sign of the Cross is never found at the beginning of an inscription, as was the custom from about the middle of the fifth century. The stamps on the bricks and tiles are mostly of the second and third centuries; several are of the times of Diocletian and Constantine; only a few of the *Officina Claudiana* (which was the first to adopt a distinctly Christian device, the monogram); not one of the fifth century or the sixth. Finally, the coins (of which an immense number has been discovered), though of course they are not used here for any chronological purpose, yet tell not unequivocally the same chronological tale. Taking a large number of instances together, it may always be fairly presumed that these things belong more or less closely to the age of the tombs in which they are found, and those that have been found in or near the graves of the Catacombs all belong to the first four centuries, not one to the fifth; nay, even those coins belonging to the second and third centuries, which are accounted by collectors to be very rare, are actually found in the Catacombs in larger numbers than more common coins of the fourth century.

Perhaps it would be hardly possible to conceive a stronger indirect testimony to the correctness of the chronological limits which De Rossi assigns to the use of the Roman Catacombs than is contained in this last observation. But we will not try our readers' patience by prolonging any further this dry yet necessary discussion. We will only add De Rossi's own statement of the conclusions which he considers to be established by these and similar observations, conclusions which he ventures to remind his readers are the fruit of the most minute analysis of more than fourteen thousand inscriptions. He says, that if there is one point which his assiduous observations during the last five-and-thirty years have succeeded in placing in the clearest possible light, it is this—that there were very numerous classes or families of Christian epitaphs without consular dates, all prior to the time of Constantine, and all belonging to the subterranean excavations; that the comparison of these classes one with another enables him to assign certain characteristics to each successive period from the beginning down to the fourth century; that at first they were all more or less laconic; then, as the style and formularies of the new epigraphy received further development, the mention of consular dates became less rare towards the end of the third century, yet did not come into really common use until after the peace of Constantine, when the more historical style of epitaphs was in vogue; finally, that whereas he announced in 1862 that there was no certain example of an ordinary burial in the Catacombs later than the year 409, now after the experience of fifteen years more he is able to reiterate that assertion with increased confidence. "I have found," he says, "a few very rare examples of burial there, granted as an exceptional privilege" (*e.g.*, to the relics of a bishop brought from Africa in consequence of the persecution in those parts, to another from Dacia, &c.), "during the first half of the fifth century, but after the year 450 not one even of these;" and he expresses a hope that "these vulgar errors, arising from a confusion

R.S., iii. 565, 566.

between the two modes of burial, may now at last be considered to have been torn up by the roots;" at any rate, he does not consider that any further assertions of the same kind deserve serious discussion or refutation.

Moreover, it must be remembered that besides inscriptions and coins which might be expected to give direct and positive evidence on the point of chronology, there are also found in the Catacombs, in the graves, or attached to the mortar whilst it was wet, a large number of other objects, which may, perhaps, bear testimony to the same point indirectly. This is not the place in which to describe, or even accurately to enumerate, the objects to which we refer; they are such as rings, bracelets, brooches, and other articles of personal adornment, bullæ and tesseræ, bells and dolls, articles of domestic use, made of bronze, ivory, terra-cotta, or bone, lamps and ampullæ. De Rossi has subjected all these things to the most careful inspection, with special reference to the age to which they belong; and our readers will see that the conclusion they lead him to is not doubtful. This is what he says of them: "From the historical and consular epitaphs to the minutest pottery marks, from the precious cameos and imperial medals to the commonest manufacture of worthless material, all has been questioned with an inquiry both positive and negative; in every case we have taken note both of what there is and what there is not. And both the positive and negative evidence has been always one, constant, and invariable. From the graves of the subterranean cemeteries of the Roman Church nothing has ever come to light of which we may say with certainty that it is of later date than the first ten years of the fifth century; not even the lamps, which might easily have been taken to the tombs and fixed there after the cessation of subterranean burial. On the other hand, the moveables of every sort which belong to the first three centuries and the age of persecution are of the greatest abundance; those of the age immediately after Constantine are less abundant, more particularly those which belong to the end of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth; lastly,

R.S., iii. 623.

the indications and material proofs of the tombs and relics of the martyrs are by no means rare.

"Moreover, this constant and solemn testimony of all the monuments, curiosities, rubbish, and cemeterial odds and ends of every kind, is in exact agreement with the evidence of history, the legal status, the administration and the very material existence of the cemeteries both above ground and under ground in the suburban zone of Rome. Precisely about the age of Constantine the suburban cemeteries in the open air began to be made within the same areas beneath which had been excavated the primitive subterranean burial-places; and in the second half of the fourth century their use became ordinary and normal.

"I do not know an instance in which the science of antiquity, and I may say, any science depending on observation, presents us with a demonstration more full, more multiplied in its widely different heads, and yet more uniformly agreed in its results, more clear in its final conclusion, and more convincing in its vast complexity. Its fundamental importance for the whole science of sacred archæology is manifest when we consider that our subterranean cemeteries are the principal and almost the only treasure-house that remains to us of the monuments of Christian art and of the epigraphic memorials of the first ages of the Church."

Mommsen has expressed the same opinion, almost in the same terms. He says that "De Rossi's labours have made it possible to trace the successive execution of the several parts of the Cemetery of St. Callixtus in periods of ten years; and that hereby a degree of chronological precision has been attained both with regard to Christian epigraphy, painting, and many other branches of archæology to which the objects found in the Catacombs belong, which cannot be looked for in any other field of archæological research." [1]

[1] Archäeologische Zeitung. Chronik der Winckelmannsfeste, p. 184. See also Note E. in Appendix.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CATACOMBS AS PLACES OF WORSHIP.

Religious worship celebrated in Catacombs—Perfect example of a subterranean Church in Cœmeterium Ostrianum, of beginning of fourth century—Earlier chambers of smaller dimensions and various forms in San Callisto—Historical confirmation of these statements—Funeral rites of ancient Christians—Prayers and offering of the holy sacrifice for the dead, and keeping the Natalitia of the martyrs in the cubicula of the Catacombs; the martyr's tomb being the altar—Monasteries built close by to keep up perpetual prayer.—Other buildings added for pilgrims, &c., till they grew into small towns.

Chapels in the Catacombs.

To deny, in the face of recent discoveries, that some chambers in the Catacombs were designed and used as places of Christian worship during the early ages, would be, in the opinion of De Rossi, "to close one's eyes against the light of the sun at noonday;" and he appeals to the remarkable subterranean church brought to light by Father Marchi (in what he called the Cemetery of St. Agnes), as of itself a sufficient demonstration.

Very large one in Cœmeterium Ostrianum,

This church had not been seen by Bosio, and was only known in a very imperfect way to any of his successors before our own time. It lay buried under a mass of soil which, having poured down through an open *luminare* during centuries of neglect, now covered the whole floor to a considerable depth, encumbering the neighbouring galleries to the distance of more than fifty yards, and filling the *luminare* itself to the height of fifty feet. "It was a most laborious and discouraging work," says Father Marchi, "to attempt the removal of such an accumulation of soil, with no certain knowledge as to what lay underneath." An indication had been left by one of the architects employed to draw the maps and plans for the illustration of Bosio's volume that there was here "a chamber

larger than others and very much higher, with a pontifical chair, and pillars, all of tufa covered with white plaster." To this Boldetti had added a drawing of the principal end of the chamber (containing the chair), which he mistook for the whole chapel, and observed that "there were other chambers adjoining, having at their entrance two pillars," &c. It is clear from this description that the whole place was hardly more accessible in those days than it was when Father Marchi returned to it in 1841; and those who had preceded him wanted either the means or the inclination to overcome the obstacles. Father Marchi had to contend also against the profound discouragement of his workmen, who, when employed in the service of antiquaries, are often as anxious as their masters to see some fruit of their labours, and not always so patient. However, when they reached the *luminare*, their spirits rose, for they had learnt from experience that they might hope to find something more than ordinary galleries underneath it. They pushed on, therefore, more eagerly with their work, and in the end their perseverance was abundantly rewarded by discovering such a subterranean church as had never before been seen in any of the Roman Catacombs. If they had only prosecuted their work of excavation a few yards farther, they would have made still more valuable discoveries; for it is precisely here that the crypt has been found of which we spoke in a former chapter as containing notices of St. Emerentiana and St. Peter's Chair.

discovered by Father Marchi.

Described.

The accompanying sketch shows the relative positions of these two most interesting crypts; and it will be worth while to give some account of them both. We will first describe the chamber that was discovered by Father Marchi, and which constitutes a kind of subterranean Basilica. It measured about forty-five feet in length (reckoning its two parts together as well as the gallery which divides them), and nearly seven in width, and its height is more than double the ordinary height of these subterranean chapels, as it is excavated in the height of

two stories instead of one. A *luminare* (K) fell directly over the gallery, thus distributing light and air to each side equally. A doorway on the left (E), with lintel-posts and architrave of travertine stone, opened into an oblong chamber (DDF), which

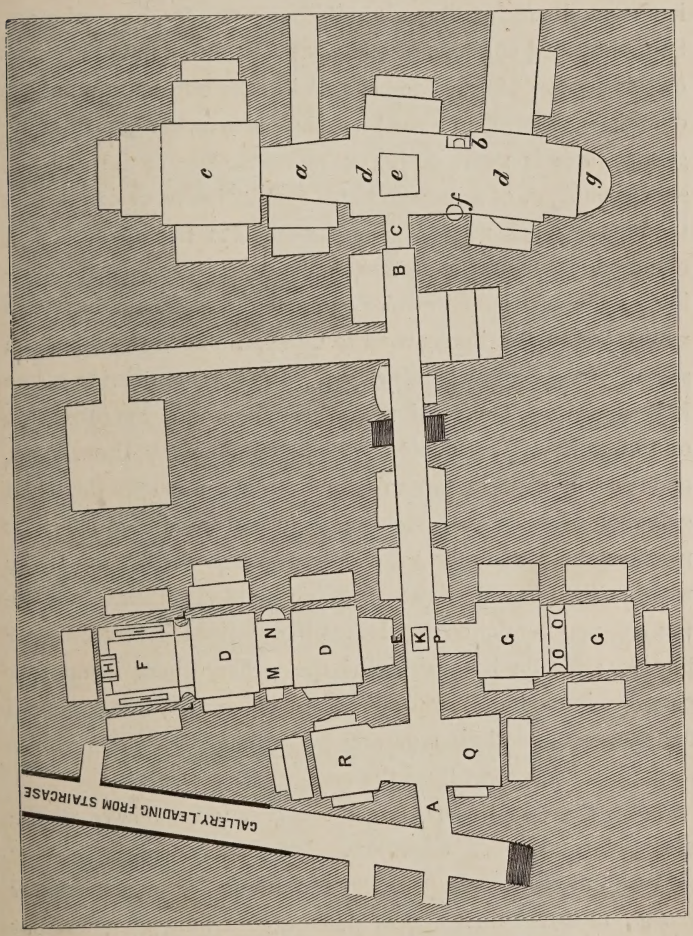


FIG. 28.—*Plan of Chapels in Cœmeterium Ostrianum.*

was one-third longer than the chamber (GG) on the opposite side of the gallery. The reason of this unequal division was obvious. The space to be occupied by the worshippers had been divided equally between men and women; but on the

men's side there was an additional space (F) at the end, corresponding to what would be now called the chancel or choir. The episcopal chair (H) was hewn out of the rock in the centre of the end of this chancel, and along the wall on both sides of it was a low bench (I I) made in the same way for the presbytery. Semi-detached columns of tufa (LL) served to define the limits of this section of the chamber; and in the outer portion of the church—the nave, so to call it—besides *arcosolia* and ordinary graves, there is a cornice (P) cut along the face of the wall at a suitable height, of sufficient width to bear lamps or candles for illuminating the whole. There were also two niches (MN), one circular, the other rectangular, not very deep, corresponding to the two lateral *exedræ* of some old Basilicas, in one of which the sacred books used to be kept, and in the other the sacred vessels and all things necessary for the offering of the holy sacrifice. The continuation of the nave on the other side of the gallery was occupied, we may presume, by the women, and was divided in the middle by the same semi-detached columns of rock (OO) as have been already described; but whether these columns were only intended for ornament, or whether they marked any real division and classification of the women, may be doubted. It was hardly needed for this latter purpose; for on both sides of the gallery there is another chamber immediately adjoining (QR), which would have served for the accommodation of any particular class which it was desired to keep apart from the rest.

Thus, then, in this remarkable excavation we have all the essential features of a Basilica. We have an ante-chamber or vestibule, as it were (QR), corresponding to the *atrium*, for the use of catechumens or of penitents; a long quadrangular chamber (DD, GG) corresponding to the *aula;* two niches for the *secreteria* and *diaconicum*, and a real *cathedra* and *presbyterium*. One only essential feature of a church is wanting, the altar; but this must have been here, as elsewhere, portable; its position would have been in front of the *cathedra*, as we find that it was in the Papal Crypt in the Cemetery of Callixtus.

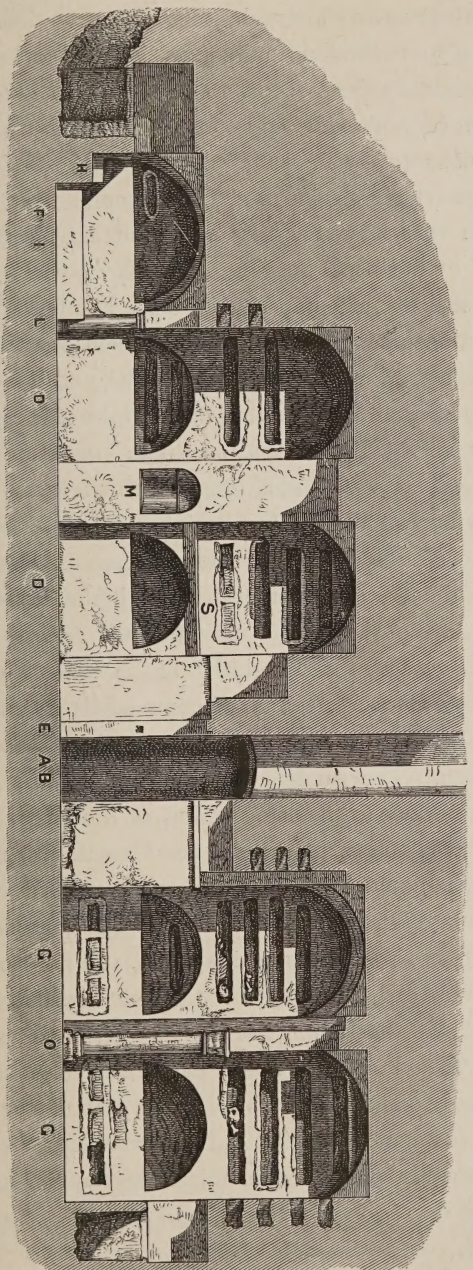


FIG. 29.—*Section of Principal Basilica in Cœmeterium Ostrianum.*

The other series of chambers is of a very different kind. They were not excavated simultaneously as part of one uniform plan. Originally there seems to have been only an ordinary cubiculum (*dd*) of modest proportions, to which certain irregular additions (*ac*) were subsequently made. A *luminare* in the centre (*e*) gives light to it, and the column at *f* is a clear indication that it was visited as a sanctuary, and honoured therefore by the usual burning of lamps or wicks floating in an open shallow vase of perfumed oil. The few letters which have been deciphered in the tribune,[1] taken together with the notices recovered from ancient documents, and the chair hewn out of the rock at *b*, tell us that this was the place where "the chair in which St. Peter first sat in Rome" was once honoured; and, indeed, a *graffito* still remains which seems almost to record as much. We can just decipher *Febras ob amor . . . . is san . . . Romæ*, in which it does not seem unreasonable to recognise the traces of some ancient pilgrim attracted to the spot by a love of the *sed*IS SAN*cti Petri, ubi prius sedit*, ROMÆ, as we still read in the description of this cemetery in the old Martyrologies, and in the parchment labels attached to the little phial of oil sent hence in St. Gregory's time to the Lombard Queen. The gradual development of this excavation belongs no doubt to the later period of the use of the Catacombs, that is to say, to the days of Damasus, or somewhere thereabouts, though the original nucleus went back, of course, to the days of the Apostles. But the grander Basilica which we have described was made all at once, and De Rossi assigns it to the very earliest years of the fourth century. It is not at all probable that it was made after the days of persecution were ended, and when it would have been so much easier to build more commodious Basilicas above ground; on the other hand, its scale of grandeur, and the completeness of all its arrangements in detail, mark a late development of subter-

Date of this chapel.

[1] See page 119. A view of the interior of the chapel has been given on page 118.

ranean architecture, and forbid our assigning to it the very early date named by Father Marchi. The truth of this assertion cannot be demonstrated without an entire topographical and chronological analysis of the whole cemetery, which has not yet been made. But, in the meanwhile, we are not altogether without definite information as to the history of subterranean architecture within the limits of another cemetery with which this may be compared.

Chapels in San Callisto of third century.

The Cemetery of Callixtus has been minutely examined, and every part of it restored to its exact chronology, with the following results. In the most ancient parts, *e.g.*, in the crypt of Lucina, which was the primitive nucleus of the whole of that cemetery, and earlier than the time of Callixtus, and in the first area to which his name properly belongs (because he altered and enlarged it), though this too had been partially used during the reign of Commodus (A.D. 180–193), the chambers are generally small; they are rarely double, or if double, one chamber is reached only through the other; they are not excavated on opposite sides of the gallery. They are rarely provided with *luminaria*, and none show signs of having been intended as places of assembly; they have every appearance of having been mere family burial vaults. But in the second area, which was made about the middle of the third century, we come upon several large chambers which were manifestly adapted for use as places of meeting. In the later areas, belonging to the latter half of the third century and the beginning of the next, the architecture of these subterranean chapels is much more developed: they are spacious quadrangular chambers, not only double, but triple, even quadruple, with other lateral appendages like those we have just seen in the Cœmeterium Ostrianum. In the Cemetery of St. Soteris, of still later date, they become polygonal, with apses and vaulted roofs, and look more like subterranean mausoleums. Finally, in another part of the same cemetery, a part which De Rossi calls Liberian, because it has monuments

belonging to that Pontificate, and seems to have been made in the second half of the fourth century, the grandeur of proportion and the magnificence of the larger crypts arrives at the highest degree of perfection which this class of monuments has ever attained; but they are not arranged with a view to large assemblies of the faithful for purposes of religious worship, as in the example with which this chapter began. De Rossi adds that this exactly corresponds with all that he has yet seen in the other Catacombs of Rome, especially in that of Domitilla, of which a considerable portion has been subjected to the same minute examination as the whole of the Cemetery of Callixtus.

Taking this analysis for our guide—and we could hardly have one more sure and trustworthy—it would seem that in the first two centuries the Catacombs were not made with a view to any general congregation of the faithful, and do not contain chambers that could have been conveniently so used; but that this use of them began about the middle of the third century, and became still more frequent as time went on. The fossors having learnt the capabilities of the material they were at work upon and the demand for increased accommodation to which they were constantly liable, grew more ambitious in their architectural efforts, and at length produced that suite of chambers which has been already described as combining to make a perfect subterranean church. When the necessity for such churches ceased, they became fanciful in their choice of forms, and excavated circular and polygonal mausoleums.

This date confirmed by historical evidence.

And this outline of the history of Christian subterranean architecture in Rome tallies with what we know from other sources as to the fortunes of the Church and the action of her persecutors during successive periods. We have seen that the first imperial interference with the free use of the Catacombs happened about the middle of the third century, and was aimed expressly against their use as places of assembly. This use of them, therefore, must have already begun. At first, no doubt, the Christians met in private houses, as we read in the

Acts of the Apostles; when their numbers increased, in the *cellæ* or *memoriæ* built over their cemeteries, and in the open air in front of and around these buildings; at least, they might have done this with the same freedom and under the same limitations as the members of a Pagan *collegium*. But as this would not have fully supplied their wants, they were driven to seek more secret places, and we have contemporary evidence that they were molested even there before the end of the second century, or in the very beginning of the third. "We are daily besieged," says Tertullian, "and betrayed, and caught unawares in our very assemblies and congregations;" and again he says in another place, addressing the heathen, "You know the days of our meetings; hence we are besieged, entrapped, and often detained in our most secret congregations."[1] Under such circumstances, of course, every place which was left accessible would have been accounted suitable for the celebration of their holy mysteries,—"the open field, the desert, the ship, the stable, the prison," as Dionysius of Alexandria says.[2] But no place could afford a more secure retreat than the Catacombs, where, as soon as suitable provision was made, they accordingly met. And then, as a consequence of this, the heathen contemptuously derided them as "a skulking, darkness-loving race;" and the emperors sought to close against them even this last place of retreat. Unless they would disobey the apostolic precept, and "forsake the assemblies, as some are accustomed,"[3] they were bound to disregard the imperial prohibition, and immediately St. Sixtus and his deacons pay the penalty. Other incidents of the same kind followed at various times during the remainder of that century and the beginning of the next, as has already been shown in a former chapter. Thus the historical evidence exactly falls in with and confirms the archæological as to the Catacombs having been used as places of Christian worship during the ages of persecution.

[1] Apol. vii. ad Nationes, i. 47.
[2] Euseb. H.E., vii. 22. [3] Hebrews x. 25.

Two questions, however, here present themselves, and demand solution: First, Were there no acts of public, or at least social worship, performed in the Catacombs before the middle of the third century? and secondly, Did such acts altogether cease when peace was given to the Church?

Funeral rites of ancient Christians.

To answer the first of these questions, we must call to mind some particulars of the ancient Christian rites with reference to the dead. And first as to the act of burial. It was a matter to which, as we have seen, considerable importance was attached; it was accounted one of the principal works of charity;[1] the poor were to be buried at the public expense;[2] grave risks were run that every fragment of the mangled corpse of a martyr might be collected, and none defrauded of perfect burial;[3] officers were appointed to see that all this was done, and the neglect of it was considered a grave offence. Further, it was a religious act in which the clergy took part. Tertullian[4] tells a story that was current in his day of a certain woman who, after she was dead and had been laid out for burial, moved her hands into the attitude of prayer as soon as the priest began to recite the prayers over her, and when these were ended she was buried. St. Cyprian tells us that it had been decreed in a council held by one of his predecessors—consequently before the middle of the third century—that if any man by his last will and testament left the burden of looking after his temporal affairs to a priest, the testator should be deprived of the holy sacrifice which would otherwise have been offered at his death (*pro dormitione*). St. Augustine,[5] in describing his mother's funeral, speaks of the sacrifice of the price of our redemption being offered for her according to the usual custom, as her corpse lay near the sepulchre, but before it was entombed.

Prayers and offering of the holy sacrifice for the dead.

[1] "Maximum pietatis officium, peregrinorum et pauperum sepultura."—*Lactantius, Div. Instit.*, vii. cc. 10, 12.

[2] Tertullian, Apolog. 39.

[3] "Plenis fraudat ab obsequiis."—*Prudentius, Peristeph.*, xi. 14.

[4] De Animâ, 29.

[5] Confess., ix. 32.

But this offering of the holy sacrifice was not confined to the day of death or burial; it was repeated on other days also, and especially on the anniversary. Tertullian, in his dissuasive against second marriages,[1] urges the religious affection which the widower must needs entertain for his deceased wife, as being already received into the presence of God, for whose spirit he prays and makes yearly oblations by the ministry of a priest, who was himself either a virgin, or at least had only once been married. And in another place[2] he enumerates this yearly celebration on the anniversary of the death of a friend or relative as one of the practices which had been handed down in the Church by tradition. Later writers[3] do not hesitate to call the tradition apostolic; and indeed, Tertullian hardly implies less when he reckons it with the renunciation of the world, the flesh, and the devil in Holy Baptism, the sign of the cross, and other such matters.

Keeping of the *natalitia* of martyrs.

To these practices with reference to the memory of ordinary Christians deceased must be added the analogous yet by no means identical practice of keeping the birthdays of the martyrs, *i.e.*, commemorating the anniversary of the day on which each soldier of the noble army of martyrs sealed his testimony to the faith by shedding his blood for it. It cannot be necessary to multiply testimonies upon this point; we will only quote one, but that most ancient and authentic, from the celebrated encyclical letter of "the Church of God in Smyrna," written in the middle of the second century. This letter,[4] after describing the martyrdom of the venerable Bishop Polycarp, and the eagerness with which the Christians had gathered what relics they could after his body had been burnt, goes on to express a hope that the Lord will "grant them to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom with joy and gladness, both in commemoration of those who have finished their contest, and to

[1] De Exhort. ad Cast., xi.
[2] De Coron. Mil., iii.
[3] St. Chrysost., Hom. ad. Philip., iii. 4; Isidor. de Off. Eccles., i. 18.
[4] Euseb., H. E., iv. 15.

exercise and prepare those who are to follow hereafter." Incidentally also we learn from the same letter that this mode of doing honour to the martyrs was already notorious, even among their enemies, so that the Jews had pretended to urge it as a reason why the body should not be given up to the Christians, "lest (they said) they should abandon Him that was crucified and begin to worship this one instead."

This was done in the *cubicula* of the Catacombs.

This is not the place in which to insist upon the difference between these annual commemorations of the martyrs and the anniversaries of the faithful departed generally. What concerns us at present is the feature which these rites had in common, viz., the celebration of the holy mysteries, and consequently a gathering of the faithful. Where were these gatherings held? The most obviously appropriate place would have been at their tombs; and the language of Tertullian and St. Augustine, if taken literally, certainly implies that it was so. It is true indeed that neither of these writers is describing a burial in the Roman Catacombs, but in Christian cemeteries of another kind elsewhere. Nevertheless we may be sure that the same funeral rites prevailed everywhere, and were everywhere celebrated much in the same way throughout the whole Church, unless some grave difficulty prevented. And for merely partial gatherings, such as of the members of a single family at a funeral or an anniversary, the small subterranean chambers which are so abundant throughout every part of the Catacombs might have sufficed; while for any larger and more general congregations such as might have been expected to assist at the feasts of the martyrs, it was possible to provide additional room in other supplementary chambers in the neighbourhood, whence the worshippers might have gone in turns to the chamber in which the actual celebration had taken place, that they might there receive the Bread of Life from the hands of "the president," or, according to the discipline of those days, it might have been brought to them by the deacons and inferior ministers.

In some such way as this we picture to ourselves the early Christians burying their dead, and commemorating the anniversaries at their tombs in the narrow vaults and galleries of the Roman Catacombs. It is no mere conjecture that the thing itself was done; this we are assured of by the unquestionable testimony of contemporary writers, such as Tertullian and Cyprian; but the human mind seeking to penetrate as far as possible into the darkness of antiquity, and, in the absence of all written record, to discover the place, mode, and other circumstances of the action, sees nothing improbable in the picture we have drawn. It is not pretended that its truth can be demonstrated by historic testimony; but there is a decree of Pope Felix I. (269-275) which perhaps bears upon the subject. It is to be found in the "Liber Pontificalis," and it orders that Masses shall be celebrated on the sepulchres of the martyrs. Some writers have supposed that this decree only confirmed what had been practised from the beginning; others, however, marking the exact time of its publication, and how it synchronises with the loss of liberty in the use of the churches above ground, have considered it more probable that it denotes something special, and was intended to insist upon the celebration of the Mass over the actual sepulchre of the martyr; that there should be a material, and not merely a moral identity between the *mensa* of the martyr's tomb and the altar of the Christian sacrifice. Or, again, that the special purpose of the decree may have been to prohibit the celebration of the holy mysteries anywhere else; that Mass should not be said on the *arcosolia* of those who had not been martyred. We find some of the *arcosolia* about this time, *e.g.*, that of the Deacon Severus, blocked up with marble trellis-work which would have effectually prevented their being used as altars, and De Rossi seems inclined to believe that this was the reason for which they were so enclosed.

Decree of Felix I.

Several of the Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries have made beautiful comments on the practice of offering the holy

The martyr's tomb the altar.

sacrifice on the martyrs' tombs, considering it as a shadow or reflection on earth of the Apocalyptic vision which St. John was privileged to behold in heaven, wherein he "saw under the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held."[1] St. Jerome for Rome, St. Ambrose for Milan, St. Maximus for Turin, and Prudentius for Spain,[2] all testify to the same practice in their respective Churches, and indeed it seems to have been universal.

The plan of the Basilicas turned upon this.

It has certainly left its mark very plainly and strongly upon the construction of the Basilicas that were made in those days. Both in the noble Constantinian Basilicas of the Princes of the Apostles, of St. Laurence, and of St. Agnes, and in the more modest constructions by Pope Damasus in the Cemeteries of Domitilla and of Generosa, the same object was aimed at, and, as far as possible, attained, even at the cost of very great labour and expense. The sites of these memorials of the martyrs were not chosen freely, on level ground, in places convenient for building; but it was necessary first to create a suitable platform by excavating the sides of the hill until they came to the tomb which it was desired to honour; and then this tomb was allowed to remain, if possible, *in situ*. The whole plan of the building was so arranged that the tomb should either fall on the precise site of the altar in front of the apse, thus merely transforming and enlarging the primitive crypt into a Basilica, or that the crypt should become the *hypogeum* and "confession," as it was called, of the sanctuary, a staircase or some other means of access to it being constructed underneath or by the side of the apse. The point to be secured was that the altar should be placed in more or less direct relation with the tomb; and this was generally effected by means of an opening in front, called the window, or *fenestella confessionis*. When the altar stood perpendicularly over the sepulchre, the *fenestella* opened into a shaft (*cataracta*) which descended to the object of veneration beneath; and through this shaft handkerchiefs

[1] Apoc. vi. 9.

[2] See Note F. in Appendix.

and other pieces of linen (*brandea*) were let down, and after being allowed to rest awhile upon the tomb, were withdrawn, and religiously kept or given away as relics. Incense also was burnt in honour of the martyr through this *fenestella*.[1]

Sometimes, however, and especially when the crypt had been already transformed into a small Basilica at some earlier period, the newer and grander building did not really include the old crypt within its enclosure, but only adjoined it, being built close up against it; but here also there was opened a door or a window, or communication of some kind, between the two Basilicas. This opening generally consisted of latticework in marble or metal, not unfrequently in silver, pierced for the admission of light, whilst through it there shone forth also a mysterious light, and there was diffused a delicious fragrance, from the perfumed wax and lamps fed with sweet balsam, which were ever kept burning in the inner sanctuary where the venerated body lay. This is the description which their founder, Paulinus, has given (both in prose and verse) of the Basilicas of St. Felix at Nola, one of which was built by the side of the other. So also the apse of the larger Basilica of St. Laurence *in agro Verano* was attached to the smaller and more ancient subterranean Basilica, and was considered one with it. So again in the Cemetery of St. Symphorosa and her seven sons, which has only just been discovered about nine miles from Rome on the Via Tiburtina, there is not one Basilica, but two, the one standing *dos-à-dos* to the other; the one large, with three naves, the other small, of the same form and size as the *cella S. Xysti* over the Cemetery of Callixtus, and between the two there is an arch of communication. In the Cemetery of Domitilla, the crypt of SS. Nereus and Achilleus was transformed, so that the sepulchre of the martyrs should fall in the middle of the

Bull., 1876, 24.

[1] In the Vatican there were two *cataractæ* over the Confession of St. Peter, and it was considered a favour to let the *brandea* descend to the lower *cataracta*. The key that served to unlock the opening to this *cataracta* was of gold or silver, and itself became an object of devotion. Bullett., 1873, 12. Borgia. Vatic. Confess., clxi. clxxxiv.

tribune before the apse, under the altar; at the end of the apse was opened an arched niche communicating with the internal galleries of the cemetery, and by the side of the apse, at the end of the right nave, was constructed a wide passage leading exactly to the back of the niche, and probably close to the tomb of St. Petronilla. We have seen the same arrangement also in the Cemetery of Generosa.[2]

Private Masses in the Catacombs;

These architectural details may have seemed to some to be leading us far away from the questions which were proposed. But, in fact, they have furnished us with the means of solving the only question which had been left unanswered, and at the same time they have opened upon us a new and interesting chapter in the history of the Catacombs. It was asked whether the celebration of Divine worship ceased in the Catacombs as soon as peace was given to the Church; and the answer is to be found in the account which has now been given of the construction of the Constantinian and later Basilicas.

Bull., 1864, 43.

For the private anniversaries of the faithful, there is no reason why it should have ceased; it would naturally have been continued as long as the piety of the representatives of those who were buried there continued to call for it. And in this light we read the testimony of Pope Siricius (A.D. 385) that it was part of the daily office of a priest to offer the holy sacrifice, whilst yet we know that there was not every day a solemn celebration of the liturgy in the Roman Church. Thus we understand also the statement of Pope Innocent I.[2] (A.D. 404), that he was in the habit of sending the Blessed Sacrament every Sunday to the priests of the various *tituli* within the city, who, on account of the people intrusted to their charge, were unable to come together to him, but that it was not sent to the priests appointed through the different cemeteries, as they had the right and the permission to celebrate there—*jus et licentiam sacramentorum conficiendorum habent.* But on the feasts of

public in the Basilicas.

[1] See page 189.

[2] Epist. xxv., Coustant. Ep. Rom. Pont., 860, 1.

the martyrs there was a double celebration—the one at a very early hour, necessarily more or less private, over the martyr's body within the Catacombs, and this was called the *missa ad corpus* and *in mane prima;* the other at a later hour, in the large church, accessible to as many of the faithful as chose to assist: this was the *missa in Basilicâ, in die, missa publica* or *major.* The traces of this distinction are clearly visible in all the older liturgical books, and the true explanation of them had been divined by some of their editors, even before the recent discoveries in the Catacombs and minute examination of the adjoining Basilicas had made it more patent. Fresh light is also hereby thrown on that part of the well-known hymn of Prudentius,[1] in which he says of the Cemetery of St. Hippolytus, that "although the cave or subterranean excavation, spite of its ample opening, is too small for the admission of the crowds who have come to do honour to the Saint, yet hard by there stands another church, noble with truly royal magnificence, into which so vast a multitude may enter." This other church would have been a Basilica of St. Hippolytus, no less than the chapel in which his body lay; and there would have been a communication between them, or they would have been actually contiguous.

The *cubicula* were used as private oratories.

If anybody feels a difficulty, in face of Felix's decree, in admitting the private celebration of the Divine mysteries in the small subterranean *cubicula* which were not consecrated by the tombs of martyrs, De Rossi would claim for them at least the dignity of private oratories, so to speak; that is, he believes they were places in which the friends and relatives met near the tomb of the deceased, and recited together prayers and psalms; and he would give this explanation of the stone chairs and benches which are sometimes found there, in preference to the explanation which has been generally given, that these rooms were used as schools for catechumens. He quotes a passage from one of the commentaries on Holy Scripture attri-

[1] Peristeph., xi. 213. See page 170.

buted to Origen, which speaks of "priests and laymen being called together on anniversaries to the *memoria* of their deceased parents or friends, or even of any others who have died in the faith," and also a very singular inscription of the year 373, found in Umbria, which bears testimony to the same practice, not on the anniversary only, but continually. He suggests, also, that it was the desire to provide for the perpetual recitation of prayers and the Divine praises in these places that led to the foundation in the fifth century, if not earlier, of so many monasteries near the Catacombs. Sixtus III., in the first half of that century, is recorded to have founded one *ad Catacumbas, i.e.*, near the Basilica of St. Sebastian, and Hilary, in the latter half of it, at St. Laurence's. A number of grave-stones, however, of "handmaids of God" (*ancillarum Dei*), which have lately come to light in this latter place, would seem to show that there had been a community of this kind established here at a much earlier period, in the fourth century, as there had also been in the neighbourhood of the Basilica of St. Agnes. The history of St. Paulinus of Nola furnishes another example of the same kind. When he retired with his wife Terasia to the tomb and Basilica of St. Felix in Campania, he built there a kind of monastery, the oratories of which looked upon the tomb of the martyr. He tells us that he provided *cubicula* all along the sides of his new Basilica, which should serve the double purpose of burial-places for the religious and their friends, and places for private prayer and meditation. And Muratori suggests that *cubicula* of this kind (which were made also round the Basilicas of St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Sebastian) were not improbably the origin of the side-chapels in our more modern cathedrals.

R. S., iii. 499.

Monasteries founded near cemeteries for continual prayer and praise.

Other buildings added for pilgrims, &c.

However this may be, it is certain that the martyrs' tombs became in time the centre of a considerable amount of building, both of a sacred and domestic character. We have a proof of this in a very long and curious inscription which belongs to St. Paul's *fuori le mura*, where it may still be seen,

but in an imperfect and mutilated condition. It was written in the end of the sixth or beginning of the seventh century, and records a great work of restoration which was made at that time by one Eusebius. It is stated that he "renewed the whole cemetery;" and it appears from the details which follow that there had been a portico in front of it, supported by marble columns and adorned with pictures, all of which were in ruins. He provided tiles, timber, and all other material that was necessary for restoring the roof; marble baths also, and benches and buildings for the accommodation of strangers, on so grand a scale as to deserve the name of *palatium.* He also provided machines for supplying water to the baths; made a fountain or baptistery and chambers round it, and guarded it by railing to keep out thieves, who had heretofore done much mischief there; he placed the whole in thorough repair, and then began, it would seem, the work of decoration; but this part of the inscription was never completed; it is only mentioned that he placed on the gates five small statues, probably of bronze. It is also stated in an earlier part of the inscription that having done all that he could for the whole building as long as he was in the world, he left money to his *alumni* when he died, and that they rebuilt from the foundation the entrance to the Catacomb (literally, to the martyrs), *i.e.*, to the Catacomb of St. Lucina at the back of St. Paul's.

"(In) nomine Dei Patris omnipot(enti)s et Domini nostri Jesu Fiil(ii ejus et Spiritus S)ancti Paracliti Eusebius infa . . . (ren)ovavit cymeteriu totu (et restituit c)olumnas in porticos (et) pictur(as qu)as in ruinas erat totas; et (refecit tec)tu cum tegulas et tablin . . n(umero) . . et acutos et materi(a reliqu)a tota; balineu, marmo(ra) quæ minus habuit et scamna, (fenes)tras, speclara;[1] item in s(up)eriora marmoravit pal(atium, c)lostra, incinos[2] et clabes (p)osuit; ut potuit usque d(um

[1] Specularia. [2] Uncinos.

es)set in seculo fecit reliqu(a f)abrica. Quando exivit de (s)eculo remisit alumnis sui(s pe)cunia; et isti fabricaverunt introitu at martyres (qu)od est in publicu a fund(amentis); f(a)bricabit mesas at martyr(es; r)otas fecit, aquam in valine(o)[1] per mangana fecit; at con(ch)a cubicula et cancellu fec(it), causa fures fecit, cia[2] mul(ta m)ala facent; item sart(a tect)a suscepit; sigilla cinque in por(tis p)osuit, compodiola. . . ."

The inscription was never completed.

The reader should take notice that all this was no new thing which Eusebius had made. It was merely a work of restoration of something which had existed, we must suppose, fifty or a hundred years before; and so too we read of Pope Symmachus, who lived quite a hundred years before this Eusebius, that he adorned in a rich and costly manner the fountain before the Church of St. Peter, setting up peacocks and dolphins of gilt bronze, together with the ancient ornament of the famous brazen pine-cone still preserved in the gardens of the Vatican Palace.

These grew into villages and towns.

Thus it was that the buildings which gradually grew up around the most famous cemeteries became in course of time so numerous and important as to form real suburbs to the city; or rather, they became little towns of themselves, which were by and by defended with walls and fortifications for the better protection of the sacred monument to which they owed their foundation. Already at the end of the fifth century or beginning of the sixth, Pope Symmachus built houses for the poor near the Basilicas of St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Laurence. Round St. Peter's more especially, *hospices* were multiplied for the pilgrims who came from different foreign nations; and this was the origin of the "Urbs Leonina," or, as it is now called, the Borgo di S. Pietro. Johannopolis grew up in the same way round St. Paul's; whilst at Nola, though the monas-

[1] Balneo. [2] Quia.

tery and the Basilicas have perished, yet the dwelling-houses that were built around them still retain in their name an acknowledgment that they owe their existence to the cemetery, for to this day the village is called Cimitele.

CHAPTER X.

THE CATACOMBS RIFLED AND ABANDONED.

Restorations in various cemeteries by various Popes from the fifth to the seventh centuries—Sketch of the administration of the cemeteries from the first; by the deacons and priests; then by special officers, Præpositi and Mansionarii—Translation of martyrs' bodies from the Catacombs to churches within the city from the seventh and eighth centuries caused the interest in the Catacombs to cease; from the end of the ninth century they fall into complete oblivion—Origin and use of the word "Catacombs."

In our last chapter we carried the history of the Catacombs, considered as places of religious worship, considerably beyond the limits which we had assigned to them as burial-places; and indeed it is hardly possible to define with precision the time at which their use in the former capacity absolutely and entirely terminated.

Restorations in various cemeteries.

It is recorded of several Popes who lived later than the fifth century that they executed certain works either of repair or of decoration in this or that "cemetery." But as the word cemetery at this time was not confined to the subterranean crypts, nor even to the burial-places that were above them and open to the light of day, but had become a generic word, including even the Basilicas and the presbyteries that were within the precincts of the burial-ground, it requires the greatest caution to read these notices aright. The texts of the Papal biographers must be compared, whenever it is possible, with the monuments of each place that is mentioned, and in this way the truth may be sometimes recovered. In other instances, their statements may be confronted with scattered notices on

the same subject to be derived from other sources. But at any rate, if we would avoid falling into very gross errors, we must never take it for granted that when a cemetery is spoken of in ancient Roman documents, the Catacombs are what is meant. Thus we need not imagine that Barbazianus, a priest of Antioch, who in the beginning of the fifth century lived in the Cemetery of Callixtus, led a life of solitude in subterranean darkness, but only that, like St. Paulinus of Nola, he made himself a home in the cemetery near the martyrs' graves, that he might derive consolation and encouragement from their presence in the life of religious retirement to which he devoted himself. Ptolemæus Silvius, a writer of that very period, mentions among the religious buildings of Rome innumerable little cells (*cellulæ*) consecrated to the martyrs. In one of these Barbazianus lived (*latens in suâ cellulâ*). The same interpretation must be generally put on any notices which occur, either of Popes or others, who, after the days of Constantine, are said to have retired to such or such a cemetery, *e.g.*, St. Boniface I., A.D. 420, to the Cemetery of St. Felicitas, and St. John III., A.D. 572, to the Cemetery of Prætextatus. These notices lie outside our subject, and therefore we shall not enumerate them in detail; but we must mention all that concerns the subterranean cemeteries, in themselves or their administration, that falls within the limits of our history.

Bull., 1863, p 43.

The first Pope after Damasus of whom there is anything special to commemorate in this connection is Sixtus III., A.D. 433–440. We have already mentioned his foundation of a monastery attached to the Basilica of St. Sebastian. He did a great deal for some other Basilicas, and something also for the subterranean sanctuaries. The "Liber Pontificalis" says that "he cased with marble a chamber in the Cemetery of Callixtus, and wrote there the names of the bishops and martyrs to commemorate them." There was an obvious necessity for some memorial of this kind, as time went on, for the guidance and instruction of the numerous strangers who came to visit these

Sixtus III., A.D. 440.

holy places; and we shall have something to say about this particular monument on a future occasion.[1] Pope Symmachus, also, besides what has been already mentioned of him, is said to have done something for the improvement of the cemetery of the Jordani—*fecit in melius* are his biographer's words—the cemetery where SS. Alexander, Vitalis, and others lay buried on the Via Salaria. Twenty years later, it is recorded of Pope John I. that he "completed," or "renewed," "the Cemetery of SS. Nereus and Achilleus on the Via Ardeatina."[2] This, however, has reference to the Basilica, which has been already described[3] as having been built within the Catacomb, and in which De Rossi believes that he can detect traces of additions and alterations that were made in the sixth century. Perhaps it had been injured by the Goths in the course of one of their earlier attacks upon Rome.

Symmachus, A.D. 500.

John I., A.D. 525.

Bull., 1874, p. 70.

But it was during their irruption under Vitiges, A.D. 537, that they did the greatest injury to the cemeteries. After what we have said in the conclusion of our last chapter, it can be no matter of surprise that the cemeteries should have attracted the attention of these barbarians as they drew near the city. In the churches they might hope to find silver and golden vessels; and from the churches it was easy to gain access to the Catacombs, in which they might not unreasonably suspect more treasure to be hid. That they effected an entrance there we cannot doubt; for there is evidence that as soon as the storm had passed, both the clergy and the people set themselves to work to repair the mischief that had been done. In two different catacombs, of the Jordani and of SS. Peter and Marcellinus on the Via Labicana, fragments have been found of two copies of an inscription by Pope Vigilius, A.D. 538–555,

[1] See pages 312–314.

[2] *Perfecit*, or *renovavit*. Some MSS. of the "Liber Pontificalis" read *fecit*; and this has misled Mr. Parker into assigning to this date the first origin of the cemetery. He forgets that monuments still remaining in their places bear dates about 130 years earlier than this.

[3] See pages 176–185.

declaring how it had grieved him to see the memorials that had been set up to the martyrs by Pope Damasus now sacrilegiously broken, and how he had done his best to restore them; and another inscription brings before us the people bearing their share in this work of restoration. Both the one inscription and the other are worth preserving. That of the Pope may be seen in the third column of the collection of inscriptions in the gallery of the Christian Museum at the Lateran. It runs thus :— Vigilius, A.D. 540.

CUM PERITURA GETÆ POSUISSENT CASTRA SUB URBE,
MOVERUNT SANCTIS BELLA NEFANDA PRIUS.
ISTAQUE SACRILEGO VERTERUNT CORDE SEPULCRA,
MARTYRIBUS QUONDAM RITE SACRATA PIIS.
QUOS MONSTRANTE DEO DAMASUS SIBI PAPA PROBATOS
AFFIXO MONUIT *CARMINE* JURE COLI.
SED *PERIIT TITULUS CONFRACTO MARMORE SANCTUS*,
NEC TAMEN HIS ITERUM POSSE PERIRE FUIT.
DIRUTA VIGILIUS NAM MOX HÆC PAPA GEMISCENS,
HOSTIBUS EXPULSIS *OMNE NOVAVIT OPUS.*

"When the Goths had pitched their tents, which were not destined to last for ever, near the city, they first waged wicked war against the Saints; and with sacrilegious spirit they upset these sepulchres which had been duly consecrated of old to the holy martyrs. Pope Damasus under the Divine guidance had identified the tombs of these martyrs, and by setting up verses there warned men that they should be rightly honoured. But the marble had now been broken, and so the holy inscription has perished. Nevertheless it was impossible that they should be again lost. Wherefore Pope Vigilius, grieving in his heart at the destruction, as soon as the enemy was driven away, presently renewed the whole work."

The inscription which records the work of restoration by the people was found in the Cemetery of SS. Chrysanthus and Daria. It runs as follows :—

PAUPERIS EX CENSU MELIUS NUNC ISTA RESURGUNT, *Bull.*, 1873, p. 46.
DIVITE SED VOTO PLUS PLACITURA DEO.
PLANGE TUUM, GENS SÆVA, NEFAS; PERIERE FURORES;
CREVIT IN HIS TEMPLIS PER TUA DAMNA DECUS.

> "These places now reappear in a better form, thanks to the contributions of the poor, but they will be more acceptable to God than the votive offerings of the rich. O barbarian race, weep over your crime! Your madness has passed away, and now the beauty of these temples has been improved in consequence of the injuries you inflicted."

This points clearly to the restoration of a Basilica above ground rather than to the subterranean excavations. But the next notice which has been preserved to us virtually includes both. It belongs to Pope John III., who filled the See of Peter A.D. 560–574, after the devastation of Rome by Totila. During this period, the disturbed state of the country rendered it inconvenient and unsafe, indeed practically impossible, that the dead should be carried so far beyond the walls of the city for the purpose of burial. The barrier, therefore, which had been set up by the old Roman law was now at length fairly broken down; and even if the law was not altered, yet certainly in practice intramural burial became common. Within the last ten years a cemetery has been brought to light on the Esquiline Hill belonging to this very time (the sixth century), and traces of others have at various times been found in other quarters of the city. It is not improbable that this may have severed the dependence of the suburban cemeteries upon the city parishes, which had formed so essential a feature in their administration in early times. At any rate, the connection between them could not have been so real and living as it had been before; and it was perhaps for this reason that the Pope whom we have named interfered to relieve the clergy from the expense of what had practically ceased to be within the sphere of their ordinary parochial ministrations. We are told that "he restored the cemeteries of the holy martyrs, and ordered that the oblations, cruets, and lights [both for doing honour to the tombs, and for offering the holy sacrifice] should be supplied from the Lateran throughout the cemeteries every Sunday."[1] We learn incidentally from a letter of St. Gregory

John III., A.D. 560.

The Popes provide for the celebration of the holy mysteries in the cemeteries on Sundays,

[1] Lib. Pont.

the Great,[1] written not many years afterwards, that the people used to hear Mass on Sunday in the cemeterial Basilica of St. Pancras. However, before the lapse of a century, this Sunday service in the cemeteries had fallen, more or less, into neglect. It had become a matter of private devotion for the more fervent priests to celebrate there; so that it is recorded to the special praise of Sergius, who became Pope A.D. 687,[2] that "during the time of his priesthood, he used diligently to celebrate the solemnities of Mass through the different cemeteries." Had the ancient system of administration still prevailed, he would have confined himself to the cemetery under his own personal jurisdiction. Fifty years later, about A.D. 731, Gregory III., a most zealous builder and restorer of churches, sought to put things on a more certain and satisfactory footing. He instituted a body of priests to celebrate masses every week, and arranged that in the cemeteries situated all round Rome, the lights for keeping the vigils on the days of the *natalitia* of the martyrs, and the oblation for the celebration of the masses, should be carried down from the palace by the *oblationarius*, through whom the Pontiff for the time being would name the priest who should officiate on the occasion. It looks as though the celebration was now no longer continued every Sunday, but confined to the festival days of the martyrs themselves. But of course this remark does not apply to the principal cemeterial Basilicas, such as St. Peter's, St. Paul's, St. Lawrence's, St. Agnes', and St. Sebastian's. Here the celebration of the Divine offices had never ceased. Pope Simplicius, A.D. 468–482, had fixed a determinate order of service with reference to the first three of these Basilicas, that the spiritual needs of those who frequented them should always find a priest ready at hand from among the clergy of the ecclesiastical *regio* upon which these cemeteries respectively depended; and the same arrangement remained substantially in force for several centuries. But for the

or at least the martyrs' feast-days.

[1] Ep. iii. 18.

[2] Lib. Pont.

minor Basilicas and their cemeteries we do not read of any such provision, probably because the smaller number of persons who visited them did not call for any special legislation. They were only visited by crowds when the festivals recurred of the martyrs who were buried in them, and for this Pope Gregory had provided.

Sketch of the administration of the Catacombs from the beginning

We are now drawing near to the point when the glory of the Catacombs was about to depart, by reason of the translation of the bodies of the martyrs into churches within the city. But before we enter upon the consideration of that important epoch in their history, let us put together as concisely as we can a summary of what we have been able to ascertain with regard to their position considered as the property of the Church up to that period. We will take it as it stands in the pages of De Rossi. He says, "If we arrange in chronological order all the *data* that with the utmost industry we can collect, availing ourselves also of the help of every most trifling hint which the minutest inspection of ancient documents can supply, it would seem that the history of the administration of the cemeteries, so far as they were connected with the common treasury of the Church, was something of this kind. From their earliest beginnings to the time of Zephyrinus, A.D. 197, their administration must have belonged, more or less, to the officer who superintended the distribution of the Church's funds, *i.e.*, of the *arca* which belonged to the *corpus*, the *Ecclesia fratrum;* and we seem to recognise the title of this officer in an old epitaph from the Catacombs,[1] MINISTRATOR CHRESTIANUS. He was undoubtedly the first deacon. From Zephyrinus to Fabian (197–236), the superintendence of the clergy and the administration of the ecclesiastical funds were specially connected with the management of the cemetery on the Via Appia, afterwards known as the Cemetery of Callixtus, which was then constituted the first or the Papal cemetery; the rest remained as they had been before, and were probably intrusted, pro-

R. S., iii. 525.

by the Deacons

[1] Boldetti, 414.

visionally at least, to one or other of the deacons, under the general superintendence of the Archdeacon. Fabian (236–250) put this arrangement on a firmer basis, and definitely distributed the suburban cemeteries among the seven deacons. He assigned to each all the cemeteries within a certain district, retaining the Cemetery of Callixtus for the Archdeacon, and reckoning, therefore, the district in which this was included as the first in that arrangement of the seven ecclesiastical *regiones* which continued down to the Middle Ages. When the persecution under Valerian had ceased and the cemeteries had been restored to the Church, it became necessary to make new enactments, and Pope Dionysius (259–268) assigned a cemetery to each of the city parishes and their titular priests. This in no way interfered with the earlier distribution of the seven ecclesiastical regions; it only made the cemeteries enter more completely into the spiritual and hierarchical system of the Church. Before, we had only heard of deacons set over them; now we read of priests; for they were not mere places of burial; the sacraments were now often administered in them. This was again re-enacted, or received fresh sanction, in the days of Marcellus, when the *loca ecclesiastica*, which had been confiscated anew by Diocletian, had been once more and for the last time restored by Maxentius. Similar relations of dependency were established between any new cemetery and new parishes that were made in the time of peace; and occasionally some of the old cemeteries too were assigned to the new parishes. The principal duties of the priests in the cemeteries which were assigned to them were of course spiritual; but they were not wholly without a share in the temporal and economical administration of them, though it is probable that this still remained principally in the hands of the deacons of the several regions.

and Priests.

Simplicius towards the end of the fifth century intrusted the three chief Basilicas (each of which was in a cemetery) to all the priests of the parishes within certain districts, requiring

them to officiate there in turn for the spiritual wants of the faithful who frequented them. Not long after this, new officers were appointed at all the Basilicas of the cemeteries to superintend the management of them, look after the lamps and everything else appertaining to public worship, attend to the giving or selling of graves, and, in a word, to administer the revenues.

Præpositi and Mansionarii.

These officers were called *præpositi* in the greater Basilicas, and *mansionarii* in the minor. The *præpositi*, at least of the three greater Basilicas, depended immediately upon the Pope; the *mansionarii*, on the titular priests of the parishes to which the cemeteries respectively belonged. The distinction, however, which we have pointed out between these names does not seem to have been always observed. Another name by which they were sometimes known was *cubicularius*, which more accurately expressed the fundamental idea of their office—viz., that they were the *custodi* of the *cubicula*, or sepulchral chambers of the martyrs. The "Liber Pontificalis" attributes to Leo the Great (440–461) the appointment of these officers at the sepulchres of the Apostles. But it is more probable that he only raised the *cubicularii* of those particular Basilicas to some higher degree of honour, since they certainly existed before his time; for we read in St. Athanasius[1] that Pope Liberius severely reprimanded the *custode* of the Confession of St. Peter, because he had not prevented the offering of certain gifts to the Confession by an officer of the Imperial Court who was an Arian heretic.

The translation of bodies from the Catacombs to churches in the city

There is reason to believe that in Rome, as in other cities,[2] some few bodies of the martyrs had been removed from their original resting-places to churches prepared for their reception even as early as the fifth century; but it had not been done often. We gather from the Sacramentary of St. Leo that in his time the bodies of SS. John and Paul were almost the only ones which lay "within the very heart of the city;" the rest

[1] c. Arianos, 37.

[2] *E.g.*, Milan in the time of St. Ambrose.

"crowned the circuit or neighbourhood of the city;" but then these bodies had not been translated; they had been secretly buried, contrary to the law, in their own houses at the very time of their martyrdom. The old Itineraries, to which we are so much indebted for our topographical knowledge of the Catacombs, and which were written in the seventh century, speak of the bodies of some martyrs being in Basilicas above ground, whom we know to have been originally buried in the subterranean cemeteries; but these were Basilicas built near the entrances to the Catacombs; and De Rossi is disposed to attribute some of them, at least, to Pope John III., whom we have seen "restoring the cemeteries of the holy martyrs" after the devastation of Rome by Totila. The earliest mention in the "Liber Pontificalis" of the translation of relics from the Catacombs to a church within the city belongs to the pontificate of Theodore, A.D. 648; the bodies of SS. Primus and Felicianus were removed from an *arenarium* on the Via Nomentana, and brought to the Church of St. Stephen on Monte Celio. In 682 Pope Leo II. removed the bodies of SS. Simplicius and Faustinus from the Cemetery of Generosa on the Via Portuensis to the Church of St. Bibiana: we have said[1] that we think we can see a reason for this translation in the exposed condition of that cemetery on the road so often traversed by the barbarian armies.

It was, not however, until after the devastations and sacrileges committed by the Lombards under Astolphus, A.D. 756, that Paul I., elected in the following year, resolved upon translating on a large scale the relics of the Saints, in order to save them from profanation.

practised extensively by Paul I., A.D. 756,

In a constitution, dated June 2, 761, he complains that whereas, even before the siege of Rome by Astolphus, some of these subterranean cemeteries had been neglected and ruined, yet by the impious Lombards this ruin had now been made more complete; for they had broken open the graves and

[1] See page 201.

carried off some bodies of the saints. "From that time forward," he says, "people have been very slothful and negligent in paying due honour to the cemeteries; animals have been allowed to have access to them; even folds have been purposely set up in them, so that they have been defiled with all sorts of corruption. Seeing, then, and deeply lamenting this careless indifference to such holy places, I have thought it good, with God's help, to remove the bodies of the martyrs and confessors and virgins of Christ, and with hymns and spiritual songs I have brought them into this city of Rome, and I have placed them in the church which I have lately built in honour of St. Stephen and St. Sylvester on the site of the house in which I was born and bred, which has now descended to me by inheritance from my father." Lists of the saints whose relics were thus translated have come down to us,[1] and there must have been more than a hundred in all.

The example set by Paul was not followed by either of his immediate successors, Stephen III. and Adrian I.; in fact, the latter strained every nerve to bring back the ancient honour and magnificence of the cemeteries. Nearly all of them bore witness to his zeal; and his restorations were continued and completed by his successor, Leo III.[2] Notwithstanding all the efforts of these Popes to revive the interest in these sacred crypts, Paschal I. was constrained to imitate the example of Paul, because the crypts of the martyrs were being destroyed and abandoned. The inscription in Sta. Prassede still attests how he translated thither two thousand three hundred bodies on 20th July 817. Sergius II. and Leo IV. continued the same work, for the greater dignity of the churches which they had either built or restored—viz., SS. Silvestro and Martino, and Santi Quattro Coronati; they also re-translated to these churches relics which had already been removed from the

again by Paschal I., A.D. 817,

and other Popes.

[1] Mai. Script. Vet., v. 56.

[2] See the long enumeration of their works in Lib. Pont. xcvii. xcviii.

Catacombs and deposited elsewhere in Rome. To these times also doubtless belongs the account of many cartloads of relics of martyrs being carried to the Pantheon; a record which has been confounded with that of the *reliquiæ*[1] placed there by Boniface IV., long before the tombs in the subterranean cemeteries were touched. We read of no more translations of relics from the Catacombs in ancient times after the days of Leo IV., A.D. 848.

Consequent neglect of the Catacombs,

All the documents which mention these translations assign the cause of them to the abandonment and ruin of the cemeteries; and, of course, the translations, in their turn, still further hurried forward and completed the work of ruin and abandonment. The sacred treasures which had caused these places to be regarded with so much love and veneration having been removed, there was no longer the same motive for protecting or ornamenting them; and thus the first half of the ninth century may be said to have ended the history of the Catacombs as shrines or places of pilgrimage, just as the beginning of the fifth had ended their history as cemeteries. Henceforward they have no history; they were soon forgotten and practically unknown. We read, indeed, that Pope Nicholas I., A.D. 860, visited the cemeteries and restored in some of them the celebration of Mass, "which had ceased for many ages;" but it is probable that even this notice belongs rather to the Basilicas above the cemeteries than to the subterranean chapels themselves. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries we read of an occasional visitor to four or five cemeteries; but they are all in the immediate neighbourhood of churches or monasteries, which had saved them from falling into utter oblivion.

and forgetfulness of them.

In a statistical account of the Roman churches and clergy written in the fourteenth century, only three of the suburban churches attached to the cemeteries are mentioned—viz.,

[1] These *reliquiæ* must have been of the same kind as St. Gregory sent to the Lombard Queen. See page 25.

those of SS. Hermes, Valentine, and Saturninus. When we come to the Books of Indulgences and Relics in Rome, belonging to the fifteenth century, even these disappear, and only one subterranean cemetery remained always open and frequented by pilgrims—the same which may still be seen beneath the Church of St. Sebastian, and which was called in all ancient documents *Cœmeterium ad Catacumbas.*

Origin and use of the word Catacomb.

This is an important fact to be noticed, because it accounts both for the use of this word, *catacomb,* as applied to the Roman cemeteries generally, and also for the topographical error which has perplexed and misled all Roman archæologists until the present day. The etymology of the word *catacomb* will probably never be satisfactorily ascertained; but at least we can state what is known of its history. A recent lexicographer[1] has written very positively that "in its original meaning the word had no connection whatsoever with sepulture, or even with excavations, but was simply used as the name of a particular district in the vicinity of Rome." But this is really a begging of the question. Undoubtedly it was used as the name of a particular spot, but as that spot happens to be one of the important subterranean cemeteries of the ancient Christians, it is certainly possible that it may have derived its name from that circumstance. The author we have referred to considers that we may safely reject the view of Father Marchi and others, that "the word is a mongrel, half-Greek and half-Latin, and that the second element is to be found in the word *cumbo,*" as based on false philological principles, and says "it is unquestionably derived from the Greek κατὰ and κύμβη," a combe, valley or hollow; and that "the district near the tomb of Cæcilia Metella and the circus of Maxentius or Romulus on the Appian Way received this designation, probably from its natural configuration." But we think he has been led to this conclusion by the erroneous supposition that the earliest use of the word is by a writer of the seventh century, when speak-

[1] Canon Venables in Smith's "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities."

ing of this very circus;[1] whereas we find it first in a Christian Calendar of the end of the third century, or beginning of the fourth. In this Calendar, the feast of St. Fabian on the 22d January is set down as being kept *in Callisti*, the feast of St. Sebastian on the same day *in Catacumbas*.[2] In the same document, the feast of St. Peter on the 29th June is similarly described *Petri in Catacumbas*, for a reason which will presently appear. St. Gregory uses the same name for the same place in his famous letter to the Empress Constantia,[3] and Boldetti found an inscription in the Catacombs recording the purchase of a tomb *in Catacumbas ad luminarem*. Thus, whereas the word nowhere occurs before Christianity began, we find it in frequent use among Christians to denote a particular cemetery long before we have evidence that it was used to denote a particular tract of country. And when we add to this the frequent coining of mongrel words in later Latin, we confess we cannot feel confident that Father Marchi's theory is to be altogether despised.

However, be this as it may, there is at least no doubt as to the particular cemetery that was first known by this name *ad Catacumbas*. And when the locality of the other Roman cemeteries was forgotten, and this alone retained its place in the "Liber Indulgentiarum," and remained always accessible, it is easy to understand how the other cemeteries came to be ignorantly confounded with this particular spot. A visit to the subterranean cemeteries came to be synonymous with a visit *ad Catacumbas;* and the term *catacomb* was gradually applied to all subterranean excavations for purposes of burial, not only in the neighbourhood of Rome, but also in Naples, Malta, Paris, Sicily, and wherever else similar excavations have been discovered.[4]

[1] "Maxentius fecit circum in catecumpas," apud Eccard. Corp. Hist. Med. Av. i. 31.

[2] Bucherius de Doctrinâ Temporum, p. 267. [3] Epist. iii. 30.

[4] The first recorded instance of the word being used in the wider sense belongs to Naples in the ninth century. De Rossi, R. S., i. 87.

BOOK IV.

CEMETERY OF CALLIXTUS.

CHAPTER I.

ITS DISCOVERY AND IDENTIFICATION.

Catacombs on the Appian Way—Cemetery of St. Sebastian's, the temporary resting-place of the bodies of SS. Peter and Paul—Confounded in fifteenth century with Cemetery of Callixtus—Discovery of epitaph of Pope Cornelius in 1849*—Consequences of this discovery—Identification of Cemetery of Callixtus.*

Pre-eminence of the Via Appia, both in Pagan and Christian Rome.

"IN the history of Pagan Rome," says Father Marchi,[1] "the Via Appia bears the proud title of Queen of Roman roads; and it makes this boast with good reason, both because of the grander scale on which it was constructed, the greater magnificence of the buildings and sepulchres which adorned it, the greater variety of conquered nations who used it, and the number and celebrity of the events connected with it. The history of Christian Rome gives to this same road titles of glory incomparably more solid, just, and indisputable. We are forced to acknowledge it as the Queen of Christian roads, by reason of the greater number and extent of its cemeteries, and still more for the greater number and celebrity of its martyrs." In another place[2] he speaks of one of the cemeteries upon this road as standing to other cemeteries much in the same relation as St. Peter's to other churches; he

[1] Monum. Art. Crist. Prim., p. 73. [2] Ibid., p. 172.

says it is "the colossal region of *Roma Sotterranea;* all the others are only small or middling provinces;" and he adds, that had he not contracted an obligation to continue his work according to the plan already begun, he would have wished to shut himself up in the cemetery he had just seen—it was precisely the Cemetery of St. Sòteris, or the region marked x in our map of St. Callixtus,—and not to come out till he had thoroughly explored and drawn maps of all its parts. Most of his work, however, was already executed before he effected an entrance into the cemeteries which so strongly impressed his imagination; and the wonders we have now to narrate have been the discoveries of De Rossi; or, as he would himself more modestly express it, of the Commission of Sacred Archæology, of which he is the Secretary. At any rate, he has been both the pioneer and the historian of the discoveries made by the Commission; and without neglecting "the provinces," he has specially devoted himself to this "colossal region;" and the three volumes of his great work already published are almost wholly given up to it.

We shall not be doing justice either to the subject or to our author unless we enter into the details of the cemeteries on the Via Appia at some length; and first, we will hear what our ancient guides of the seventh and eighth centuries have to tell us upon the subject, for so we shall be better able to follow the course of De Rossi's investigations, and to appreciate both their ingenuity and importance.

Testimonies of ancient authors.

One of these guides, the most ancient and accurate of all,[1] describing what he himself saw and visited at some time between the years 625 and 638, writes as follows:—"Afterwards you arrive by the Via Appia at St. Sebastian, martyr, whose body lies in a very low spot; and there are the sepulchres of the Apostles Peter and Paul, in which they rested forty years; and on the western side of the church, you go down by steps to the place where St. Cyrinus, Pope and mar-

[1] Notitia Ecclesiarum Urbis Romæ, p. 23. R. S., i. 139.

tyr, rests. And on the north side of the same road you come to the holy martyrs Tiburtius, Valerian, and Maximus. There you will enter into a great cave, and you will find there St. Urban, bishop and confessor; and in another place, Felicissimus and Agapitus, martyrs, and deacons of Sixtus; and in a third place, Cyrinus, martyr; and in a fourth, Januarius, martyr; and in a third church again, St. Zeno, martyr, rests. On the same road, at St. Cecilia's, there is an innumerable multitude of martyrs: first, Sixtus, Pope and martyr; Dionysius, Pope and martyr; Julian, Pope and martyr; Flavianus, martyr; St. Cecilia, virgin and martyr. Eighty martyrs rest there below [in the subterranean cemetery]. Zephyrinus, Pope and confessor, rests [in a church] above. Eusebius, Pope and martyr, rests in a cave some way off. Cornelius, Pope and martyr, lies in another cave some way off. After this, you come to the holy virgin and martyr Soteris, whose body lies towards the north side; and then you leave the Via Appia, and arrive," &c.

The route described by the next witness[1] proceeds in the opposite direction. He has just described what was to be seen on the Via Ardeatina, and then he continues :—"Near the Via Appia, on the eastern side of the city, is the Church of St. Soteris, martyr, where she lies with many martyrs; and near the same road is the Church of St. Sixtus, Pope, where he sleeps; there also St. Cecilia, virgin, rests; and there St. Tharsicius and St. Zephyrinus lie in one tomb; and there St. Eusebius, and St. Calocerus, and St. Parthenius lie, each apart; and 800 martyrs rest there. Not far from thence, in the Cemetery of Callixtus, Cornelius and Cyprian sleeps [*sic*] in a church. There is also near the same road a church of many martyrs, *i.e.*, of Januarius, who was the eldest of the seven sons of Felicitas: of Urban, of Agapitus, Felicissimus, Cyrinus, Zeno, the brother of Valentine; Tiburtius and Valerian,

[1] De Locis Sanctis Martyrum quæ sunt foris Civitatis Romæ, p. 23. R. S., i. 141.

and many martyrs rest there. And near the same road is the Church of St. Sebastian, martyr, where he himself sleeps; where are also the burial-places of the Apostles, in which they rested forty years. There also the martyr Cyrinus was buried. By the same road also you go to the city of Albano," &c.

Four principal cemeteries on this road.

Without entering into the minute details of any apparent discrepancies between these two accounts, their substantial agreement is abundantly manifest. Nobody can read them attentively without observing that they describe four distinct groups, or centres, of martyrs' tombs on the Appian Road. One, the most distant from Rome, as you go towards Albano, is the Church of St. Sebastian, with the cemetery belonging to it. Another, on the north side of the road, contained the graves of St. Cecilia's husband and brother-in-law, Valerian and Tiburtius; of Felicissimus and Agapitus, two of St. Sixtus's deacons; of Januarius, the eldest of the seven sons of St. Felicitas; and of many other martyrs. The third is described in still more glowing terms as containing an "innumerable multitude of martyrs," amongst whom are specified St. Sixtus and other Popes, St. Cecilia, St. Tharsycius, and others. Lastly, there is the church and cemetery of the holy virgin and martyr St. Soteris, before you leave this road and cross over to the Via Ardeatina. Let us begin by saying a few words about the first.

First cemetery, St. Sebastian's.

The Basilica of St. Sebastian, built by Constantine over the tomb where the body of this martyr still rests, is well known to every visitor of Rome. It stands on the Appian Road, between two and three miles out of the city; and a friar from the adjoining monastery being always ready to act as guide and descend into the extensive subterranean cemetery, this has been more visited perhaps than any other portion of the Roman Catacombs. He cannot, indeed, show you "the steps on the western side of the church, whereby we descend to the grave of St. Cyrinus, Pope and martyr," though De Rossi is of opinion that these also might now be found without much diffi-

culty; but he can lead you round to the back of the high altar and show you the "burial-places of the Apostles," that is, the semi-subterranean building in which, according to the authorities we have quoted, the bodies of SS. Peter and Paul once found a temporary resting-place. The form of this building is so irregular that it would never have been selected by an architect for its own sake, but it was manifestly designed to enclose some particular point of interest, without interfering more than was necessary with what lay around it. It is impossible, therefore, to assent to the theory which would recognise in it some ancient heathen temple; it is clear that it was erected expressly for the sake of commemorating a spot endeared to the Church by associations connected with her days of persecution; and in fact it is the one only point throughout all the Catacombs of which we are sure that it continued to be visited by devout pilgrims in the fourth and fifth centuries, although the relics which had made it holy had been long since removed. Pope Damasus provided a marble pavement for its floor, and otherwise adorned it, at the same time setting up one of his usual metrical and historical inscriptions, which exists in old MSS., and an incomplete copy of which, executed in the twelfth or thirteenth century, may still be seen.

Temporary resting-place of the relics of SS. Peter and Paul.

R.S., iii. 36.

HIC HABITASSE PRIUS SANCTOS COGNOSCERE DEBES,
NOMINA QUISQUE PETRI PARITER PAULIQUE REQUIRIS.
DISCIPULOS ORIENS MISIT, QUOD SPONTE FATEMUR.
SANGUINIS OB MERITUM CHRISTUMQUE PER ASTRA SEQUUTI,
AETHERIOS PETIERE SINUS ET REGNA PIORUM.
ROMA SUOS POTIUS MERUIT DEFENDERE CIVES.
HÆC DAMASUS VESTRAS REFERAT NOVA SIDERA LAUDES.

"Here, you must know, that saints once dwelt. If you ask their names, they were Peter and Paul. The East sent disciples, as we willingly acknowledge. The Saints themselves had, by the merit of their blood-shedding, followed Christ to the stars, and sought the home of heaven and the kingdoms of the blest. Rome, however, obtained to defend her own citizens. May Damasus be allowed to record these things for your praise, O new stars [of the heavenly host]."

A low step or seat of stone runs round the interior, destined (Father Marchi conjectures) for the use of those who recited here in choir the psalms and public offices of the Church. In the middle of the area is a small square aperture, widening at the depth of about two feet into a large pit or double grave, measuring between six and seven feet both in length, breadth, and depth. This pit is divided into two equal compartments by a slab of marble; its sides are also cased with marble to the height of three feet, and its vaulted roof is covered with paintings of our Lord and His apostles. This, then, is the spot where, according to the testimony of both our ancient witnesses, "the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul rested for a period of forty years."

Their first resting here.

There is some difficulty in unravelling the true history of this temporary translation of the bodies of the Apostles. Originally they were buried each near the scene of his own martyrdom, the one on the Vatican Hill, the other on the Ostian Way. But we learn from other equally authentic sources, that as soon as the Oriental Christians had heard of their death, they sent some of the brethren to remove the bodies and bring them back to the East, where they claimed them as their fellow-citizens and countrymen. These messengers so far prospered in their mission as to gain a momentary possession of the sacred relics, which they carried off along the Appian Way, as far as this spot which we have been just now examining, adjoining the Basilica of St. Sebastian. This was probably their appointed place of rendezvous before starting on their homeward journey by way of Brundusium; for just at this point a cross-road, coming directly from St. Paul's, joins the Appian and Ostian Ways, by which ways the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul respectively must have been brought. What happened to them whilst they rested here we cannot exactly tell. The language of Pope Damasus, which we have given above, while it hints at the claim of the Orientals and the successful opposition of the Romans, bears evident tokens

of reserve, and we can easily understand his unwillingness to perpetuate on a public monument which would be seen by pilgrims from all parts of the world a history that might hereafter become a subject of angry recrimination between the Eastern and Western Christians. But St. Gregory the Great, writing two centuries later, and only in a private letter, had no such motive for reticence. A chapel having been built in the Imperial Palace at Constantinople, to be dedicated to St. Paul, Constantia, wife of the Emperor Maurice, wished to enrich the altar with some considerable relic, and begged from the Sovereign Pontiff nothing less than the head of the great Apostle. St. Gregory, in justification of his refusal to comply with her request, relates the story—embellished perhaps by this time with some legendary additions—of the attempt of the Oriental Christians to carry off his relics soon after his martyrdom, and says, "It is well known that at the time when they suffered, Christians from the East came to recover their bodies as [the relics] of their fellow-citizens, and having carried them as far as the second milestone from the city, laid them in the place which is called *ad Catacumbas;* but when the whole company of them assembled together and attempted to take them from hence, a storm of thunder and lightning so greatly terrified them and dispersed them, that after that they durst not make any more attempts. The Romans, however, then went out and took up their bodies, having been counted worthy to do this by the goodness of the Lord, and laid them in the places where they are now buried."[1] These last words of St. Gregory do not seem to be quite accurate. There is no doubt that the Romans first buried them where they recovered them, in or near the Cemetery *ad Catacumbas*, and there was an old tradition, embodied in one of the lessons formerly used on St. Peter's Feast in the French Church, which said that they were restored to their original places of sepulchre after

[1] Opp. St. Greg., tom. ii. Ep. 30.

the lapse of a year and seven months;[1] nor is there any reason to suppose that the body of St. Paul was ever again removed. Of the relics of St. Peter there are faint traces of a second translation, which is assigned by some writers to the first half of the third century. They are too indistinct, however, to be depended upon, and we must be content to acknowledge our ignorance as to the authority on which it was believed by the writers of the Itineraries in the seventh and eighth centuries, that the bodies of the Apostles had lain near the Basilica of St. Sebastian for a period of forty years.

Second translation of St. Peter's relics.

We have now seen all that the writers of those Itineraries thought worthy of being mentioned in connection with the Basilica of St. Sebastian. A guide, however, of the present day would certainly press us to descend also into the subterranean cemetery which lies around and underneath the church, and if we are persuaded to accept his invitation, we shall see there inscriptions professing to point out to us several other objects of religious interest. An inscription set up by one William [de Bois-Ratier] Archbishop of Bourges in the year 1409, bids us venerate here the tomb of St. Cecilia; other inscriptions also, of the same or a later date, speak of the tombs of nearly half a hundred Popes, and of several thousands of martyrs, and announce that *Hic est cimiterium Beati Callixti Papæ et Martiris incliti.* Whence is this? A glance at the ancient documents which we have quoted is sufficient to arouse our suspicions as to the truthfulness of these inscriptions, since the two authorities are manifestly at variance with one another; and we can scarcely hesitate in making our choice between them, when we remember that the one was written whilst yet the bodies of the martyrs lay each in its own sepulchre, and that the other belongs precisely to that very age during which the Catacombs were buried in the most profound darkness and oblivion. We have already explained how it came to pass

Erroneous inscriptions of fifteenth century.

[1] This is the time mentioned in the apocryphal Acts of SS. Peter and Paul, § 87, p. 39, ed. Tischendorf.

that whilst the other ancient cemeteries were inaccessible and unknown, this one still remained partially open; and we can easily understand the religious feeling which prompted the good Archbishop to make an appeal to the devotion of the faithful not to lose the memory of those glorious martyrs who had once been buried in places like this, and even somewhere in this neighbourhood. But whilst we admire his piety, we cannot accept his testimony upon a topographical question which he had no means of deciding, and in respect to which recent discoveries, as well as a more critical examination of ancient documents, have proved to a demonstration that he was certainly wrong.

Reasons why this cannot be the Cemetery of Callixtus.

It was in the year 1849 that De Rossi found in the cellar of a vineyard on the Via Appia, but much nearer to Rome than St. Sebastian's is, a large fragment of a marble slab, having on it the upper part of the letters R and N, followed by the com-

Epitaph of St. Cornelius.

plete letters ELIUS · MARTYR. He immediately divined that this fragment was part of the tombstone of St. Cornelius, Pope

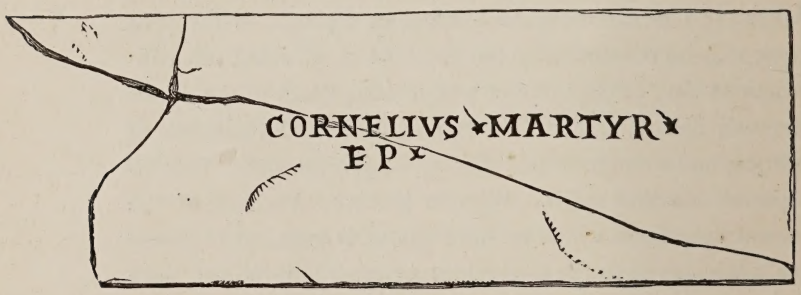


FIG. 30.—*Epitaph of Pope Cornelius*

in the middle of the third century. He persuaded Pope Pius IX. to purchase both this and the adjacent vineyard; and three years afterwards, during the excavations of 1852, the other half of the same marble slab came to light in the depths of the subterranean cemetery which underlay this vineyard. It was found at the foot of a grave, for which it had evidently been made at the first. It contained the other half of the letters R and N, preceded by CO, with the letters EP on a lower line, so that

De Rossi's happy conjecture was thus crowned with the seal of absolute certainty.

Moreover, he had satisfied himself, by a diligent study of all ancient documents within his reach, that the tomb of St. Cornelius was very near, though not absolutely within the limits of, the famous Cemetery of St. Callixtus, and that in this cemetery there was a single chapel more famous than the rest, in which had once been laid the bodies of many Popes of the third and fourth centuries, and in another chapel adjoining it, St. Cecilia. Excavations having been made in accordance with his suggestions, a fragment of marble was at length discovered, bearing on it three letters, or rather the same letter (H) repeated three times, one over the other, as the beginning of three successive lines.[1] His keen eye, recognising the well-known beauty of the Damasine characters, immediately fastened upon this as "a confirmation strong as text of Holy Writ" that this was the Papal vault, in which Damasus had set up one of his most celebrated inscriptions. As the work of excavation proceeded, a hundred and twenty other fragments of the same inscription were recovered. These all have been put together, and the few missing portions having been supplied in letters of a different colour, the whole may now again be read, just where our forefathers in the faith first read it fifteen hundred years ago. We shall have occasion to examine it more closely by-and-by, when we meet with it in its own place in the interior of the cemetery. We appeal to it now as a decisive proof, from which it is impossible to escape, that the Cemetery of St. Callixtus has been rediscovered, and that the mediæval inscriptions underneath the Church of St. Sebastian were set up in ignorance, and now only help to perpetuate the memory of an error. They confound the first and third of the cemeteries so carefully distinguished in the Itineraries, and which we ourselves also are now happily able to distinguish again.

Damasine inscription in the Papal Crypt.

We take our leave, then, of the first group of martyrs' tombs

[1] The fragment was the beginning of lines 4–6. See Plate V.

described by our ancient guides as having been visited by them on the Via Appia, and pass on to the second. It was "on the north side of the road," and our reader will have already recognised from the names of the martyrs that it is the Catacomb of which we gave a description in the last Book under its ancient name of Prætextatus. The third is the Cemetery of Callixtus, with its "innumerable multitude of martyrs." But as this has been the special field of De Rossi's labours, we are able to give a much more full and accurate account of it, and must begin *ab ovo*.

Second cemetery that of Prætextatus.

Third, that of Callixtus.

CHAPTER II.

DISTINCTION OF ITS SEVERAL PARTS.

*Different areæ in one cemetery—Accurate maps of the Catacombs due to an invention by M. De Rossi—*1. *Crypt of Lucina, originally belonging to the Gens Cæcilia;* 2. *Cemetery of Callixtus, properly so called, begun before the end of second century, added to at various times;* 3. *Cemetery of Soteris;* 4. *Cemetery of Balbina.*

Distinct *areæ* in each Catacomb.

On the same side of the Appian Way as the Church of St. Sebastian's, but about a quarter of a mile nearer to Rome, a doorway, with the words *Cœmeterium S. Callixti* carved above it, admits us to the vineyard beneath which lies this celebrated cemetery. We call it indeed by this name for convenience sake, and because the cemetery which Callixtus made is really the centre and most important part of the vast subterranean city on which we are about to enter. In truth, however, it is made up of several distinct groups of excavations, each having its own history, and still capable of being distinguished, at least in outline, from one another, though now, and for many centuries past, actually united. They may be distinguished not only by their contents, certain peculiarities of form, or different families of inscriptions, or other similar tokens, but much more by the disposition of the main galleries, which was determined by the size and shape of the area the *fossors* were at liberty to occupy, and the situation of the roads or buildings which already existed above ground.

Defects of former maps.

This is almost a new branch of study in the subject of *Roma Sotterranea*, for which, as for so much else, we are indebted to De Rossi. Indeed, it was scarcely possible for

earlier writers to gain any clear notion of the manner in which these cemeteries had been constructed, since their knowledge of the plan of any one of them was very incomplete; and of most they never had an opportunity of seeing any plan at all. Bosio himself had not lived to prepare that part of his work; and of the half-dozen maps which Cardinal Barberini procured at so much labour and expense for the illustration of Bosio's book, not one was really complete. For the main object in their construction had been rather to show the sites of particular monuments than to exhibit the interior arrangement of the whole cemetery, either as designed by its originators or as subsequently modified in execution. The four additional maps supplied by Aringhi are mere fragments, and the only one which is of any size is strangely inexact. To these, D'Agincourt added another, but this also was too small to be of much service in a scientific point of view. Finally, Father Marchi produced a very valuable map of what he believed to be about the eighth part of the Catacomb of St. Agnes; and the only portion of his book which he completed was intended to illustrate this particular branch of the subject—the architecture of the first Christians in Rome. He never pretended, however, to observe any chronological order, but pursued a simply eclectic principle in his choice of specimens. The whole of the Catacombs were for him a monument of primitive antiquity, and his sphere of observation was too limited to allow of his drawing any general conclusions from distinctions that might be observed between one part and another of the excavations.

Important discoveries from Michele De Rossi's new method of mapping subterranean galleries.

Since his time a complete revolution has been effected in this respect, by means of a most ingenious instrument invented by Michele De Rossi, brother of the archæologist, which renders the process of surveying and mapping these subterranean crypts far easier, as well as more accurate, than it was before. Under his auspices, we may hope by-and-by to see the maps of the streets of subterranean Rome as complete as

those of any modern city above ground. Already we have entered into many fruits of his labours, and the value of the light which they throw on the history of the Catacombs can hardly be exaggerated. With his map of the Cemetery of Callixtus, for example, lying open before us, we are able to trace with certainty several features in its growth and development which before it was impossible to detect. We distinguish the boundaries of certain *areæ*, originally quite independent of one another, but united at a later period by paths of more or less irregularity. We see the first galleries, following the form and respecting the limits of these *areæ* with mathematical precision; we mark others, after proceeding for a considerable distance in one direction, turn abruptly into another, or break off altogether; and a glance at the condition of the external soil at once explains the cause of the digression. There are traces of some building, or the building itself is still there, at that precise spot, which clearly must have existed before the subterranean excavation, and which the Christians dared not undermine; or there was some chamber or gallery in this or an adjoining Christian cemetery, or some Pagan *hypogæum*, which stayed their farther progress. In a future book we will set before our readers as minute an analysis as our space will allow of one at least of the more remarkable groups of galleries in the Cemetery of St. Callixtus, which will enable them to appreciate the importance of M. De Rossi's invention. At present we will only enumerate and distinguish those groups, as far as we can, not so much by reference to their construction as by their inscriptions and other contents.

Plan of San Callisto.

Several *areæ*.

The most ancient area included in the Catacomb we are now examining is that which was once called "the Crypt of Lucina, *near to* the Cemetery of Callixtus." The original limits of this area can be determined with the greatest precision, in consequence of its having a small Pagan sepulchre on either side of it. Like the tombs of the Scipios, of Cecilia Metella, and other renowned sepulchres on the Via Appia, it

Crypt of Lucina. Plan, Area I.

occupied a frontage of 100 Roman feet, and extended 230 feet *in agro*. Of these 230 feet, the first fifty appear to have been originally left free, thus forming an area in front, of 100 feet by 50, in the centre of which stood the monument[1] whose Dh 4. vast ruins still form a striking object from the road. Behind this area extended another (*area adjecta monumento*), and it was beneath this that the earliest Christian excavations in this place were made.

Originally belonged to the Gens Cæcilia.

The property belonged to some members or connections of the Gens Cæcilia. We know from Cicero[2] that this was one of the families who had their burial-places on this road; and about the beginning of this century, *columbaria* and inscriptions belonging to other Pagan monuments of the Cæcilii were found at no great distance from this precise spot. It cannot, then, be considered a fortuitous circumstance that in the chambers and galleries of this part of the Catacomb there have come to light epitaphs and other memorials of several Cæcilii and Cæciliani, and these not mere freedmen who had adopted the name of the *gens*, but real members of the family, as is clearly marked by the official adjuncts to their names, *vir clarissimus*, *clarissima fœmina* or *puella*, *honesta fœmina*, &c. Moreover, we note among the "illustrious dead" who lie in this aristocratic cemetery certain descendants of the Antonines, who were clearly connected with Annia Faustina, the granddaughter of Marcus Aurelius, and the wife of Pomponius Bassus, and afterwards of Heliogabalus. Now, it is known that these Pomponii Bassi, towards the end of the first century,

[1] De Rossi considers it quite possible that even this may have been originally a Christian monument (R. S., ii. 367, iii. 466), and quotes Tertullian (De Resurrect. Carnis, c. 27) as a witness that Christians had *monumenta et mausolea* from the first (R. S., i. 210). It has been already shown that there was nothing whatever in the Roman laws to prevent it. In these public *monumenta*, the tokens of Christianity would, of course, be only few and veiled, and this makes it difficult to establish satisfactorily their Christian character. (Bullet. 1871, 84; 1872, 98-100; 1873, *in fin.*)

[2] Tusc. Quæst., i. 7.

lived on the Quirinal; and it can be *almost* proved that they inherited the house of the celebrated Atticus, the friend and correspondent of Cicero, of whom every classical scholar knows that he certainly lived on the Quirinal, and that he passed from the Gens Pomponia to the Gens Cæcilia, when he was adopted by his maternal uncle, Q. Cæcilius. Hence it is easy to account for the number of Christian epitaphs which have been found here, exhibiting these names mixed in various ways, *e.g.*, more than one Cæcilius Faustus, a Faustinus Atticus, an Annia Faustina, an Atticianus, a Pompeia Octavia Attica, an Attica Cæciliana, &c. We find also in this cemetery the gravestones of some heathen members of a branch of the same family, the Pomponii Bassi; the stones are sawn in two, or otherwise defaced, and then (by a kind of *vol domestique*, as M. Allard happily expresses it) used to close the Christian graves. One of these was of a Pomponius Bassus who had lived in the third century, and had filled some of the highest offices of the state, been twice consul, prefect of Rome, &c., and another of L. Pomponius, proconsul of Gallia Narbonensis. Probably their Pagan burial-place was somewhere in the immediate neighbourhood. *R.S.*, ii. 362.

From the union of all these names on the same spot and under these circumstances De Rossi was led to conjecture that *possibly* the Lucina in whose property the ecclesiastical records state this Catacomb to have been excavated may have been the very Pomponia Græcina of whose conversion to Christianity in the year 58 we have already spoken.[1] We need not say how frequently this name of Lucina occurs in ancient ecclesiastical history; it crops up in the history of every persecution, from the apostolic age to the days of Constantine, and has been the occasion of no slight confusion, and the subject of many learned discussions among students of hagiography. De Rossi suggests that the name was a Christian *agnomen* (alluding to the illumination of baptism and the light

St. Lucina probably the Pomponia Græcina of A.D. 58.

[1] Page 82.

of faith) rather than a real family name, and that it may have been borne by many Roman matrons in succession without any real connection of relationship between them, these ladies being of course known in society and among their heathen kinsfolk by their proper family names.

This use of a double name, even in public and civil acts, was by no means uncommon under the Empire; and the Acts of the Martyrs and the Christian inscriptions show that it was much practised among the faithful. A shepherd under examination by the Pagan magistrates answers that his common name, or name "in the world," is Parasius, but his real name, his name as a Christian, is Sozon, or Saviour. Some Christians bore the names Renatus, or Renata, Redemptus, or Redempta, Anastasia, &c., all clearly derived from their religious faith, and in no way interfering with the names which they bore as members of such and such a family.

R.S., i. 315. *Bull.*, 1865, 51; 1867, 31.

There was nothing extravagant, then, or improbable in De Rossi's suggestion that perhaps Pomponia Græcina may have been known among Christians by the name of Lucina; nevertheless, when first he mentioned it, he spoke with extreme caution and reserve. "It is a mere guess," he said; "I don't wish to claim for it any value as an argument; perhaps it hardly even deserves the name of a conjecture. But attempts of this kind, violent efforts of the mind, which arouses itself at the faintest glimmer of light amid the thick darkness of antiquity, and seeks to rush forward to the acquisition of new truth, may at least serve to awaken attention, and to keep it keenly on the alert for every scrap of additional information which future discoveries may bring to light, and out of which prudent study may extract the full knowledge of historical facts, now only guessed at and only *in confuso*." De Rossi wrote thus in his first volume in 1864. In the middle of the second volume, written early in 1867, he says, with reference to the same subject, that "although his guess has been very favourably received by the learned, yet it must not be taken for more

R.S., i. 391.

R.S., ii. 282.

than it is worth until new and more important monumental discoveries shall place it on a more solid foundation." At the end of the volume, however, he is able to explain what was the monumental evidence he desired, and to announce that he had found it. He had no positive evidence either of the relationship between the Pomponii Bassi and the Pomponii Græcini, or that the profession of Christianity had prevailed in either family. He now publishes inscriptions, or at least sufficient fragments of inscriptions, found in this cemetery, and belonging to the end of the second century or beginning of the third, two of which testify to the Christian burial here of Pomponii Bassi, and one of a Pomponius Græcinus; and although even now the argument has not the force of demonstration, yet it is impossible to deny that it has a great deal of probability in its favour, and impossible also not to admire the modesty, learning, and ingenuity by which it has been supported.

R.S., ii. 336.

We shall have occasion to return to these genealogical particulars in a future chapter, as illustrating the fact of Pope Cornelius having been buried here, apart from the other Popes, his immediate predecessors and successors, in the middle of the third century. But before the making of his sepulchre, which involved considerable alterations in the interior arrangements of the crypt, two floors of galleries had been already excavated and filled. The upper of these floors is not one sixth of the extent of the lower; indeed, it is unusually limited, from the necessity of the case. It had been dug at a depth of not more than twenty feet below the surface; and as the hill slopes rapidly, the galleries would have run out into the open air, had they been prolonged to any distance upon this high level. The general characteristics of this primitive area of the cemetery are a certain marked uniformity of plan in the form and decoration of the roof, the unusual height of the galleries, and the frequent recurrence of square, narrow chambers, not opposite one another on different sides of the gallery (as was the almost universal practice in

Characteristics of this area.

later work), but opening one out of the other. Several of these chambers are adorned with paintings of a very early style. Only two instances of *arcosolia* occur, and both of these are in portions of evidently late construction. Square-headed *table-tombs*, however, as we have ventured to call them, are very abundant.

Cemetery of Callixtus begun before A. D. 200.

About the time of Marcus Aurelius, in the second half of the second century, another plot of ground, at no great distance from the Crypt of Lucina, was given (probably by the same family) for the same purpose. It bordered on a road which

Area III.

united the Via Appia and Via Ardeatina, and which we therefore call the Via Appio-Ardeatina, and its measurement was 250 feet by 100. It is in this area that we shall presently visit the Papal Crypt, the Chapel of St. Cecilia, and other monuments of historic value. We shall not enter now upon any detailed description either of this or of the next area, as their construction and development will form the subject of the more minute analysis already promised, and several of their chapels are so important that they will claim each one a chapter to itself. It will be sufficient to mention here, that in the first area, as in the Crypt of Lucina, there are no *cubicula* opposite to one another, but five or six in a row, opening out of the same side of a broad spacious *ambulacrum*, like so many bedrooms out of the passage of a private house; and most of them very richly ornamented with symbolical paintings of very high antiquity. This was the first area of the Cemetery of Callixtus, properly so called, the Crypt of Lucina having, as we have seen, originally formed a cemetery by itself. It contains many tombs of a very peculiar form, such as are to be seen only in one other part of the whole cemetery; graves having no more than the ordinary opening on the outer side, yet so excavated interiorly, at the cost of infinite labour, as to be capable of containing many bodies.

Area V.

In another area, measuring 150 feet *in fronte* by 125 *in agro*, and made on the other side of the Via Appio-Ardeatina,

not long after the one we have just spoken of, we find large crypts on opposite sides of the pathway, lit by the same *luminare*. *Arcosolia* are here very abundant, both in the crypts and galleries. There is not much painting in the chambers, but it is easy to see that the inner walls of some of them were originally faced with slabs of marble.

Area VI. A fourth area, of the same dimensions as the last, seems to have belonged to the days of Diocletian, or may have been begun perhaps a few years earlier. If we may conjecture from the family names which occur in this third area of the Cemetery of Callixtus proper, we should be disposed to suspect that it had been given to the Church by Anatolia, the wealthy daughter of Fulvius Petronius Æmilianus, who was Consul A.D. 249, and who probably died a Christian. It is certain that he had property in this neighbourhood, for all the leaden water-pipes that are found here are stamped with his name, and in the cemetery itself we meet with epitaphs of an Æmilius Parthenius, an Æmilianus, an Æmil . . . a Tulinus, and a Petronia, *clarissima femina*. Moreover, Calocerus and Parthenius, whom Æmilianus had appointed to be his daughter's guardians, were buried here, in a crypt ornamented with a painting, which seems to represent two martyrs or confessors standing before the tribunal of the heathen magistrate; this painting probably has reference to their own history.[1] One of the peculiarities of this area, not to be found in either of those we have described before, is a great variety of representations of the cross, all more or less disguised, yet still to the eyes of the initiated sufficiently significant; that which was afterwards adopted as the monogram of Christ's name and the cross combined (the well-known Chi and Rho — the Labarum of Constantine), being, however, of very rare occurrence amongst them. This also seems exactly to correspond with the age

Enlarged about A.D. 300.

R.S., ii. 210–219.

[1] So many coincidences of names and dates and other memorials can hardly be fortuitous, so that though we cannot prove or affirm positively, yet we think it highly probable that this ground had originally belonged to the gentleman we have named. See Plate VIII.

we have attributed to it; indeed, the question of chronology is clearly settled by the dates of epitaphs found here belonging to the end of the third and beginning of the fourth century. The inscription of the accompanying plate which belongs to this area tells us of two of its chambers with *arcosolia* and *luminare* having been made by a Deacon named Severus with the sanction of Pope Marcellinus, who belongs to this precise period.[1] In a lower level of this cemetery three chambers are to be seen united instead of two, all receiving light and ventilation from the same *luminare;* clearly, for the sake of assemblies, not of burials; and although we do not see any traces of the seats for the presbytery, or of the episcopal chair, hewn out of the rock, as in the somewhat analogous chambers in the so-called Cemetery of St. Agnes, this is probably because they were made of wood or marble, and movable from place to place.

Cemeteries of St. Soteris

Areæ VII., VIII., IX., X.

To the same date belongs also the adjoining Cemetery of St. Soteris, a cemetery consisting of four very extensive areas, now indeed united with that of Callixtus, but originally distinct from it. This was the fourth centre of devotion mentioned on the Via Appia by the old Itineraries, and will require therefore special mention in a future chapter.

and of St. Balbina.

Area XV.

Another cemetery which was ultimately united to that of Callixtus was the Cemetery of St. Balbina. It is placed by some of our old guides on the Via Appia, by others on the Via Ardeatina; it really lies between the two. Bosio and Boldetti erroneously fixed its locality as having been where we have now found the Catacomb of Callixtus. De Rossi, following his usual guides, determined its situation long since, but was unable to recover it. His brother fixed his eye on the ruins of an ancient building and some suspicious-looking fissures in the soil, in the precise spot indicated by the archæologist; but though he managed to effect an entrance, he

R.S., i. 265.

[1] See Epitaphs of the Catacombs, p. 46, and Plate IX.

found nothing to reward his search. At last, February 13, 1867, some unusually heavy rains revealed a new opening for him into the bowels of the earth, and this time he was able to wander about for an hour and more in the newly discovered Catacomb. The Commission of Sacred Archæology are too much crippled by want of means to be able to pursue the investigation far. Enough, however, has been seen to enable De Rossi to say that the size of the necropolis between the Appian and Ardeatine roads is nearly doubled by the discovery; that the proportions of this subterranean labyrinth surpass all his imaginations founded on previous experience, and fill him with amazement. It is not only of immense extent, but it is excavated on several different levels, has many large crypts, and is illuminated by shafts contemporaneous with the formation of the cemetery, and of grander proportions and more highly developed architectural forms than any he has found before. In particular, he specifies one *luminare*, not square, but hexagonal or nearly so, which opens on the subterranean excavations with not less than eight rays of light. Two serve to illuminate as many large rectangular chambers, each ending in a circular apse; two others, the adjacent galleries, which here cross one another at right angles; and the other four descend upon four long and narrow openings at the corners, which are not yet explored, but which he believes will be found to end in an equal number of *cubicula*. Should his anticipation be realised, this will be the largest and most regular group of subterranean crypts that has ever yet been seen. We must remember, however, that this cemetery was considerably enlarged by St. Mark, who was Pope A.D. 336; he built a Basilica here, in which he was himself buried; and we read that Constantine endowed it with a *fundus rosarius*, and an adjoining field. We have already seen that the *Rosatio*, or strewing with roses, was a rite observed at many Pagan tombs on the anniversaries of deaths, and that funds

Bull., 1867, 1-5, 30-32.

Its characteristics.

Bull., 1867, 1-5, 30-32.

O.H., 7321. were specially set apart for celebrating this *dies rosationis vel violationis*, as it was called. This particular *fundus rosarius* had become the property of the imperial *fiscus*, and Constantine again devoted it to sepulchral purposes, but in a Christian way.

CHAPTER III.

THE PAPAL CRYPT.

Graffiti at the entrance, of three kinds; names, acclamations, invocations of the martyrs—Successive decorations of the Papal Crypt—Its restoration by De Rossi justified—Original epitaphs of several Popes—Why all found together—Burial-places of all the Popes from A.D. 200 *to* 312 *identified—Detailed examination of the Damasine inscription—Probable number of martyrs—Conjectured restoration of inscription of Sixtus III.*

Entrance of the Papal Crypt.

ON entering the vineyard over whose doorway we read the words *Cœmeterium S. Callixti*, we come first to the Crypt of Lucina. It will be more convenient, however, to pass it by for the present, and go forward to the modest building which stands before us in the interior of the vineyard, and which De Rossi has identified as the *cella memoriæ*, sometimes called of St. Sixtus, sometimes of St. Cecilia, because built immediately over the tombs of both those celebrated martyrs, probably by St. Fabian in the third century.[1]

Plan V.

Graffiti on the walls.

As we descend into the interior by means of an ancient staircase restored, we are struck, at the bottom of the stairs, and still more at the entrance of the first chamber we come to, by the number of *graffiti*, as they are called, which cover the walls. It is comparatively a new thing to pay any attention to these rude scribblings of ancient visitors on the walls of places of public resort, and to take pains to decipher them. But of late years many valuable discoveries have been made by means of them, and they have proved to be a most interesting subject of study, whether found on the tombs of Egyptian kings in

III. P, L.

[1] See Page 86. A sketch of this *cella* may be seen p. 165.

Thebes, on the walls of the barracks and theatres in Pompeii, in the prisons and cellars of Pagan Rome, or, lastly, in the Christian Catacombs. Here especially they have proved to be of immense importance, being, as De Rossi justly calls them, "the faithful echo of history and infallible guides through the labyrinth of subterranean galleries;" for by means of them we can trace the course that was taken by pilgrims to subterranean Rome from the fourth to the seventh century, and identify the crypts or chapels which were most frequently visited. Probably there is no group of ancient *graffiti* in the world to be compared, either for number or intricacy, with those which cover the wall at the entrance of the crypt we are about to examine; and it must have required the most minute examination and indefatigable perseverance to disentangle and decipher them. The work, however, has been done by De Rossi; and

Of three kinds:

we find that they may be divided into three classes. They are either the mere names of persons, with the occasional adjunct of their titles; or they are good wishes, prayers, salutations, or acclamations, on behalf of friends and relatives, living or dead; or, lastly, they are invocations of the martyrs on whose tombs, or near to whose tombs, they are inscribed. Numerous specimens of all of these may be easily read on the spot of which we are now speaking.

1. Names.

Of the names we find two classes; one, the most ancient and most numerous, scribbled on the first coat of plaster and in the most convenient and accessible parts of the wall, are names of the old classical type, such as Polyneicus, Elpidephorus, Tychis, Maximus, Nikasius, and the like; the other, belonging manifestly to a somewhat later period, because written on a later coat of plaster and high above the first, and in more inaccessible places, are such as Lupo, Ildebrand, Ethelrid, Bonizo, Joannes Presb., Prando Pr. *indignus peccator*, &c.

2. Prayers or acclamations.

Prayers or acclamations for absent or departed friends are mixed among the most ancient names, and generally run in the same form as the earliest and most simple Christian

epitaphs, *e.g.*, VIVAS, VIVAS IN DEO CRISTO, VIVAS IN ETERNO, ZHC EN ΘΕΩ, BIBAC IN ΘΕΩ, TE IN PACE, &c. "Mayest thou live in God Christ, for ever, Thee in peace,"[1] &c. The feeling which prompted the pilgrims who visited these shrines thus to inscribe in sacred places the names of those they loved and would fain benefit is natural to the human heart: instances of it may be found even among the heathen themselves. Thus, one Serapion, son of Aristomachus, having visited one of the temples in the island of Phyle in Egypt, writes there, that "having come to the great Isis, Goddess of Phyle, he makes a remembrance there of his parents, for their good."[2] Just so the Christian pilgrims of the third and fourth centuries, visiting, not fabulous sanctuaries, but the tombs of martyrs whose names and stories were still fresh in the hearts of all, wrote the names of some dear friend or relative, with some pious ejaculation, "for their good."

Example.

One of these it is especially interesting to track, after an interval probably of fifteen hundred years, along the precise path of his pilgrimage through the Catacomb of Callixtus. He had come with his heart full of the most affectionate memory of one Sofronia—whether wife, or mother, or sister, does not appear. Before entering on the vestibule of the principal sanctuary (III. L, L), he wrote, *Sofronia, vibas cum tuis;* then, at the entrance itself, *Sofronia,* [*vivas*] *in Domino;* by-and-by, in larger characters, and almost in the form of a regular epitaph, he scratched on the principal altar-tomb of another chapel (V. a_6 1), *Sofronia dulcis, semper* VIVES *Deo;* and yet once more he repeats in the same place, *Sofronia,* VIVES,[3] where we

[1] None of these simple forms except *in pace* has ever yet been found on epitaphs which can be shown to be later than the days of Constantine. On rings and articles of domestic furniture they are sometimes found, even as late as the end of the fourth century.

[2] Letronne, Inscript. de l'Egypte, ii. 28.

[3] "Sophronia, mayest thou live with thine own. Sophronia, mayest thou live in the Lord. Sweet Sophronia, thou wilt live for ever in God. Sophronia, thou wilt live."

can hardly doubt but that the change of mood and tense reflected, almost unconsciously perhaps, a corresponding change of inward feeling; the language of fervent love and hope, fed by earnest prayer at the shrines of the saints, had been exchanged at last for the bolder tones of firm, unhesitating confidence.

3. Invocation of martyrs.

But besides mere names and short acclamations, there are also in the same place, and manifestly belonging to a very early age, prayers and invocations of the martyrs who lay buried in these chapels. Sometimes the holy souls of all the martyrs are addressed collectively, and petitioned to hold such or such an one in remembrance, and sometimes this prayer is addressed to one individually; more frequently (nine times) to St. Sixtus II. than to any other, because of his historical connection with the Catacomb, which will be presently recorded.

MARCIANUM SUCCESSUM SEVERUM SPIRITA SANCTA[1] IN MENTE HAVETE, ET OMNES FRATRES NOSTROS.

PETITE SPIRITA SANCTA UT VERECUNDUS CUM SUIS BENE NAVIGET.[2]

OTIA PETITE ET PRO PARENTE ET PRO FRATRIBUS EJUS; VIBANT CUM BONO.

SANTE SUSTE, IN MENTE HABEAS IN HORATIONES AURELIU REPENTINU.

ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΝ ΕΙΣ ΜΝΙΑΝ ΕΧΕΤΑΙ (for ΕΧΕΤΕ.)

"Holy souls, have in remembrance Marcianus Successus Severus and all our brethren."

"Holy souls, ask that Verecundus and his friends may have a prosperous voyage."

"Ask for rest both for my parent and his brothers; may they live with good" [*i.e.*, in happiness, or with Him that is good].[3]

"Holy Sixtus, have in remembrance in your prayers Aurelius Repentinus.

"Have ye in remembrance Dionysius."

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[1] In epitaphs of the third century *spiritum*, instead of *spiritus*, is often used for the soul or spirit of a man. *Insc. Christ.*, I. cxii. Bullett., 1873, pp. 55, 56. R. S., ii. 311.

[2] *Optat sibi ut bene naviget* is one of the *graffiti* at Pompeii, published by P. Garrucci, S.J., *Graffiti de Pompeii*, Planche xix. 1.

[3] *Otia* probably refers to some temporal relief, and is not meant for *pax*.

Their antiquity.

There is a simplicity and warmth of affection about these brief petitions which savours of the earliest ages; they are very different from the dry and verbose epitaphs of the latter half of the fourth or fifth centuries; indeed, there is something almost classical about the third, reminding us, says De Rossi, of Horace's *Otium Divos rogat in patenti prensus Ægæo;*[1] and the phrase, which is so frequently repeated in them, *in mente habere*, points to the same antiquity. It is found on an inscription in Pompeii, on two or three Christian epitaphs of the third and fourth centuries, and is used by St. Cyprian in one of his letters:[2] "Have in mind," he says, "our brothers and sisters in your prayers;" *fratres nostros ac sorores in mente habeatis in orationibus vestris.* These nameless pilgrims, therefore, made the same petition to the saints in heaven that St. Cyprian made to the saints on earth, *i.e.*, they asked the help of their intercessory prayers.

Many of these *graffiti* have been spoilt, cut off in the middle, or rendered otherwise illegible, by the enlargement of the doorway, the renewal of the stucco, and other changes which were made in this chapel by St. Damasus about the year 370. One of those that has been thus mutilated is undoubtedly the most ancient of all, for it was written whilst yet the plaster was wet, and it is an apostrophe or acclamation to one Pontianus, who can only have been the Pope of this name, brought back from Sardinia, where he had died in exile, and buried in this very chapel by St. Fabian, A.D. 245. This inscription runs thus:— ΕΝ ΘΕΩ ΜΕΤΑ ΠΑΝΤΩΝ (ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΩΝ?) ΠΟΝΤΙΑΝΕ ΖΗCΗC. "Mayest thou live, O Pontianus, with all [thy predecessors] in God." No doubt it was written at the time of the translation of his relics.

There is yet another inscription on the entrance of this first chapel, of a later period, and somewhat different kind, but too remarkable to be passed over. The inscription is incomplete; but what there is of it sufficiently shows the enthusiastic devo-

[1] Od. ii. 16. [2] Ep. ad. Ep. Numid. lx., aliter lxii.

tion with which the writer's heart was warmed towards the sanctuary on whose threshold he stood. It runs thus: *Gerusale civitas et ornamentum Martyrum Domini, cujus* . . . The idea present to the writer's mind was evidently the same as we find both in Holy Scripture and in some of the earliest uninspired Christian writers, who not unfrequently speak of the glory of the Church triumphant under the title of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem.[1] He looked upon the chapel he was about to enter as a type or figure of the future Jerusalem. It was adorned and made venerable by the remains of many martyrs of the Lord, which should one day arise to receive new life and rejoice in His presence for ever.

Examination of Papal Crypt.

Atlas, B.*e.*, 4. *Plan* L.

The inspection of these *graffiti*, then, is enough to warn us that we are on the threshold of a very special sanctuary of the ancient Church, and to excite our deepest interest as to what we may find it to contain. Our first impression on entering will probably be one of disappointment. We were led to expect that we were about to visit a Christian burial-place or place of worship of the third or fourth century, but the greater part of the masonry we see around us is manifestly of quite recent construction. The truth is, that when this chamber was rediscovered in 1854, it was in a complete state of ruin; access was gained to it only through the *luminare*, which, as usual, had served for many centuries as a channel for pouring into it all the adjacent soil, fragments of gravestones from the cemetery above ground, decaying brickwork, and every kind of rubbish. When this was removed, the vault of the chamber, deprived of its usual support, soon gave way; so that, if any portion of it was to be preserved and put in a condition to be visited with safety, it was absolutely necessary to build fresh walls, and otherwise strengthen it. This has been done with

[1] See Psalm cxxi., Apoc. xxi. 2, Tertullian *de Spectac.*, c. xxx. This same writer speaks also of the world as *expressus in ornamentum majestatis Dei.—Apolog.*, c. xvii.

the utmost care, and so as still to preserve, wherever it was possible, remains of the more ancient condition of the chapel and of its decoration in succeeding ages.

Thus we are able to trace very clearly in the arch of the doorway three stages or conditions of ornamentation by means of three different coatings of plaster; the uppermost, or most recent, is ornamented with coarse arabesques of the seventh or eighth century; the second, of which large portions have been laid bare by the falling off of the topmost coating, contains the Constantinian monogram, and was probably contemporary either with Damasus or Sixtus III.; and the first, or oldest coating of all, was ornamented only with red bands. We can trace also the remains of the marble slabs with which, at a later period, the whole chapel was faced; and even this *later* period takes us back to the earlier half of the fifth century, when, as the "Liber Pontificalis" tells us, St. Sixtus III. *platoniam fecit in Cœmeterio Callixti.* The fragments of marble columns and other ornamental work, which lie scattered about on the pavement, belong probably to the same period. Again, the raised step or dais of marble, which we see directly opposite to us at the farther end of the chapel, having four holes or sockets in it, shows plainly where the altar once stood, supported on four pillars; but in the wall behind this platform we seem to detect traces of a yet older and more simple kind of altar, a sepulchre hewn out of the rock, the flat covering of which was probably the original *mensa* for the celebration of the holy mysteries in this place. It was not a real *arcosolium*, but what we have called a table-tomb; moreover, the front of the sepulchre itself was not a mere wall of the rock, so left in the original process of excavation, but is an excellent piece of brickwork, precisely such as we find in the Crypt of St. Januarius in the Cemetery of Prætextatus,[1] and to which we cannot assign a later date than the earliest part of the third century;

Successive periods of decoration.

Ancient altar

[1] See page 136.

indeed, it might not improbably have belonged to the end of the second. The presence of these two altars tells a tale, which is corroborated by other indications also, too minute to be appreciated without a personal inspection of the locality—viz., of some alteration in this or the adjoining chapel made at a very early period, which necessitated the translation of the martyr originally buried in the principal tomb of the *cubiculum*, and that then the episcopal chair, of which we shall speak presently, was placed behind the new altar on the slightly raised ledge which still remains. De Rossi conjectures, but would not have us accept it as more than a conjecture, that this martyr was no other than St. Zephyrinus himself, the original designer of the whole cemetery, for whom, therefore, the chief place in the first vault might very naturally have been reserved. That the body of this Pope was translated at some early date, before the practice had become common, is proved by what we have already read in one of the old Itineraries, that his body lay *in a church above ground*, and (as we learn from a second Itinerary) St. Tharsycius lay in the same tomb with him.

Restoration of the whole chapel by De Rossi described and justified.

Thus, spite of the ruin and the neglect of ages, and spite of the work of restoration which has been thereby made necessary in our own time, many clear traces still remain both of its original condition and of the reverent care with which successive generations of the ancient Church did their best to adorn this chamber. De Rossi has given his readers a beautiful sketch of it, as he believes it to have been after its completion;[1] reminding them, at the same time, that this "restoration" is no mere product of his own fancy, void of all authority. On the contrary, it has been suggested in nearly all its details—in some it is even required—by what may still be recognised amid the wreck of its former splendour. The place of the altar was settled beyond dispute by the four holes which remain, the sockets of its four pilasters. The episcopal chair stands in its

[1] See Plate III.

ΦΑΙΔΙΜΟΣ ΕΠΙΣΚΟ
ΕΥΤΥΧΙΑΝΟΣ ΕΠΙΣΚ
ΠΟΝΤΙΑΝ
ΦΑΙΔΙΜΟΣ ΕΠ
ΛΟΥΚΙΣ ΕΠΙΣΚΟ

accustomed place. Both the chair and altar are surrounded by a balustrade of marble, partly solid, partly of pierced lattice-work, and terminated at one end by a *hermes* with a female head; the *hermes* and fragments of the balustrade were found amid the rubbish, and could not have occupied any other position than that to which De Rossi has restored them, enclosing the altar, yet so as to leave a free passage into the adjoining chapel. The ornamentation of the walls reproduces the facing of marble which was provided by Sixtus III.; and the graves are closed, partly with gravestones of certain Popes found here upon the ground, partly with others of the same fashion inscribed with the names of other Popes whom we know from history to have been buried here. In the four niches excavated in the lowest parts of the walls, four sarcophagi are placed, one of which has the cover that was found here, inscribed with the name of *Urbanus E*[*piscopus*].

On either side of the chapel, occupying part of its area, standing out in front of two of the niches which have just been spoken of, are two large rectangular tombs, the one nearly perfect, the other a ruin, both built of solid masonry, and which must have once contained the mortal remains of two distinguished Christians. The covers of both these tombs are lost; and De Rossi in restoring them has ventured to add, on the authority of an ancient document, two names, GREGORIUS PRESB., EUSEBIO HOMINI DEI, probably two confessors of the faith. Even the cornice, supported by pilasters, which surmounts the Damasine inscriptions and runs round the top of the whole chapel just at the spring of the vault, has only been reconstructed on the model of fragments which have survived among the debris. Of the two spiral columns of marble which stand one on either side towards the middle of the chapel, the bases have never been out of place, and more than one fragment of the columns themselves was found on the floor. What these columns supported has been entirely destroyed or removed. It was probably, however, an architrave such as our

R.S., ii. 108–111.

plate exhibits; for representations of similar decorations in ancient Christian chapels are to be seen on various monuments, where they appear supporting lamps and curtains, the use of both of which is alluded to by some of the Fathers.[1]

Its inscriptions.

The only features of the furniture of the restored chapel which remain to be spoken of are the inscriptions, which are in truth the most important part of the whole, since they reveal to us the cause of the extraordinary and long-continued veneration in which the chapel was held. We will speak first of the gravestones which were recovered from amid the rubbish with which the chapel was filled, and which are now restored, if not to the precise spots they originally occupied (which we cannot tell), yet certainly to the walls in which they were first placed. An exact copy of them is given in our Plate IV., and the reader will recognise the names of four or five Popes who sat in the chair of Peter during the third century. There are Anteros and Fabian, who sat from A.D. 235 to 250; Lucius, A.D. 252; and Eutychianus, who lived nearly thirty years later, and perhaps Urban, who was earlier than any of them, A.D. 230.

No one having an intimate acquaintance with Christian epigraphy doubts that these are the original gravestones of the bishops whose names they bear; and the objections which have been urged against them by some popular writers are rather arguments in favour of their authenticity; as, for instance, their extremely "curt and unceremonious" character; for we have already seen similarly simple inscriptions commemorating St. Linus in the first century, and St. Cornelius in the third.[2] Or, again, their uniformity of character; for if this was the recognised and (so to speak) the official burial-place of the Popes at that time, what else should we expect but the precise

[1] See Bullettino, 1869, p. 33–45. Garrucci Vetri, xxxiv. 10.

[2] See pages 113 and 272.

uniformity of an official record, and what other title or token of episcopal dignity could be looked for?[1]

Care for the burial of bishops.

The fact that so many tombstones of bishops should have been found in the same place, whereas they had never been found in any other part of the Catacombs before, either by Bosio, Fabretti, Boldetti, or any other of the ancient explorers of subterranean Rome, might suggest to an intelligent student of archæology that perhaps it was the practice in the ancient Church to reserve some special place of burial for those who had filled the highest rank in her hierarchy. And this conjecture receives strong confirmation from the fact which has been already mentioned, that the earliest successors of St. Peter (with a very few exceptions, which can generally be accounted for) lay buried each in his own sepulchre, "near the body of blessed Peter in the Vatican,"[2] just as the bishops of Alexandria were buried near the body of St. Mark. Moreover, it was an object of great jealousy to the several Churches that their bishops should be buried in the midst of them; their tombs were appealed to as a testimony to the apostolic tradition and doctrine having come to them through a legitimate succession of bishops. Thus Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, writing to St. Victor, carefully enumerates the burial-places in different cities of Asia of the several bishops, "great pillars of the Church" as he calls them, whom he alleges as witnesses in his behalf.[3] Caius, in like manner, disputing against Proclus and the Cataphrygians at the end of the second century or beginning of the third, appeals to the tombs of Saints Peter and Paul, "the trophies," as he calls them, "of those who laid the foundations of the Church," which, he says, they will see if

Bull., 1864, 49.

[1] On the original meaning of *Episcopus* and the date of its ecclesiastical use, see "The Epitaphs of the Catacombs," page 111.

[2] See the Chronological Table after Preface; also the testimony of the Itinerary, which, after mentioning St. Peter's tomb, immediately adds, "Et Pontificalis ordo, excepto numero pauco, *in eodem loco* in tumbis propriis requiescit."—R. S., i. 141.

[3] Euseb. H. E. v. 24.

they go on the Vatican or on the Via Ostiensis.[1] Hence, if a bishop happened to die at a distance from his own see, his body was ordinarily brought home, even at considerable inconvenience; *e.g.*, the body of St. Eusebius from Sicily; of St. Cornelius from Civita Vecchia; and of St. Pontianus from the island of Sardinia. The bodies of all these Popes were brought back to Rome, though two of them at least had died in exile; for the law distinctly allowed the bodies of exiles to be brought home for interment, provided the Emperor's leave had been first obtained,[2] and in the instances here alleged, the translation was not made until a change in the imperial policy towards the Church made it possible to obtain such leave. Nor was this translation an honour peculiar to the bodies of deceased Roman Pontiffs. On the contrary, the relics of St. Ignatius were restored to Antioch; the body of Dionysius, Bishop of Milan, was recovered by St. Ambrose, and that of St. Felix, Bishop of Tiburtium, martyred at Venosa, was returned to Africa. Perhaps, also, this practice furnishes the best explanation which can be given of the attempt made by the Christians of the East to recover the bodies of Saints Peter and Paul.[3]

Their bodies often brought home from a distance.

Bull., 1864.

There would be always, of course, some exceptions to the practical observance of such a custom as this, and Rome was likely to be the most frequent witness of these exceptions, for bishops were constantly flowing thither from the earliest times, *propter potiorem principalitatem*, as St. Irenæus says; and proofs are not wanting that this was far more common, even in the ages of persecution, than we should have been prepared to expect. Thus we learn from St. Cyprian[4] that sixteen bishops from other sees were present in Rome at the election of St.

Many foreign bishops buried in Rome.

[1] Euseb. H. E. ii. 25.

[2] Digest. xlviii. 24, 2. See examples in Gruter, ii. 789, 1; Corp. Lat. Ins. iii. 1312; Tacit. Annal. xiv. 12.

[3] See page 270.

[4] Epp. 41, 42, 49, 52.

Cornelius in the year 251, of whom two at least were from Africa, and two others arrived from Egypt not long afterwards; and St. Cornelius was able to call together no fewer than sixty to take counsel about the system of discipline to be observed in reconciling apostates.[1] That some foreign bishops, then, should have been overtaken by death during their sojourn in Rome was not improbable; and if their dioceses were unwilling or unable to recover their remains, we may be sure that the Roman Pontiffs would have made honourable provision for their interment.[2] Hence we are not surprised at finding some traces of bishops, who certainly were not bishops of Rome, even in this very chamber, which had been specially prepared as a place of burial for the Popes from the date of its first commencement at the beginning of the third century.

Popes buried in this cemetery.

The first Pope of whom it is distinctly recorded that he was buried here was St. Zephyrinus, A.D. 215, the chief author of the cemetery. Some writers, indeed, following certain editions of the "Liber Pontificalis" would place the burials of St. Anicetus, A.D. 163, and St. Soter, A.D. 177, in this same Catacomb. But this is certainly an error. In all the older recensions of that book they are placed in the Vatican, where at that time all the Popes were buried. The mistake, with reference to St. Soter, very probably originated from some confusion of the name with that of St. Soteris, virgin and martyr, whose cemetery has been already mentioned as being in this neighbourhood.

Zephyrinus.

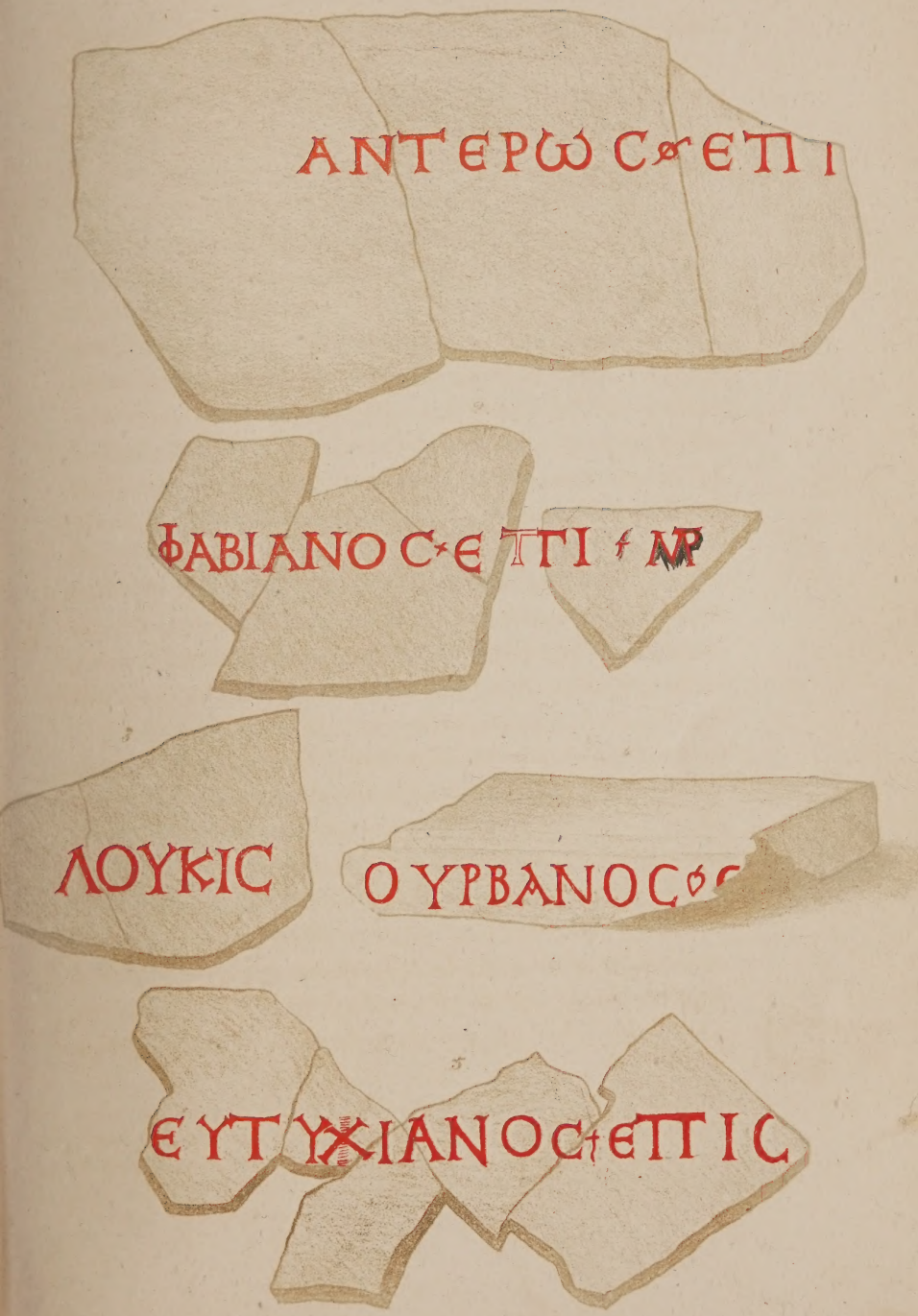
St. Callixtus, the successor of St. Zephyrinus, who so long presided over this cemetery, was not buried in it, but this was owing to the peculiar circumstances of his death. He did not

[1] Euseb. H. E. vi. 43.

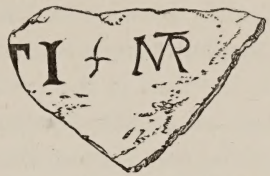
[2] It was a decree of the Council of Arles, A.D. 314, that foreign bishops visiting Rome should have a church assigned them for the celebration of the holy sacrifice.—*Conc. Arel.*, can. xix., *apud* Collect. Reg. Max., i. 266. See also Euseb. H. E. v. 24, *in fin.*, on the respect shown to St. Polycarp in Rome by St. Anicetus.

suffer martyrdom after a judicial sentence and under the penal laws of the government, but privately, and as the result of a popular tumult. He was thrown out of the window of his house in Trastevere, and his body cast into a well, whence it
Urban I. was secretly removed to the nearest cemetery, that of St. Calepodius, on the Via Aurelia, which has therefore been sometimes called another Cemetery of St. Callixtus. Callixtus was succeeded by St. Urban, and we have seen a broken tombstone in this chamber, which had belonged not to a mere ordinary grave in the wall, but was part of the lid of a sarcophagus, and bore the letters OYPBANOC E . . . It is commonly stated, indeed, that St. Urban was buried in the Cemetery of Prætextatus, on the other side of the road; but Tillemont, Sollier, and many other men of learning, have long since pointed out that there had been a confusion in the old Martyrologies, from a very early date, between two bishops of the name of Urban —the one a martyr, who was buried in Prætextatus, the other,
Pontianus. Pope and confessor, buried in St. Callixtus. The next in order of succession was St. Pontianus, who, having been banished to Sardinia, there resigned his pontifical dignity,[1] and was succ-
Anteros. ceeded by St. Anteros, whose monument we just now saw. He filled the chair of Peter only for a few weeks, and because he diligently sought out the Acts of the martyrs in the official records of the Prætor Urbanus, he suffered martyrdom before
Fabian. the death of his predecessor. His successor, St. Fabian, brought the body of St. Pontianus back to Rome, and buried it in this chapel, where its position, *after* that of St. Anteros, caused some of the early chroniclers to invert the true order of these two Popes, and so to introduce an element of endless confusion into the history of those times. The inscription on

[1] *Discinctus* is the word used in the "Liber Pontificalis." Le Hir considers it merely a translation of ἀπελύθη, and to be used for death (*Études Bibliques*, vol. i. p. 268, note). But the explanation given in the text is more probable and more generally accepted.


ΑΝΤΕΡΩ C ΕΠΙ
ΦΑΒΙΑΝΟ C ΕΠΙ
ΛΟΥΚΙC
ΟΥΡΒΑΝΟC
ΕΥΤΥΧΙΑΝΟC ΕΠΙC

St. Fabian's tomb, besides his name and title, exhibits a monogram, clearly intended to denote the fact of his martyrdom. It will be observed that this monogram is not cut nearly so deep as the earlier part of the inscription, neither is it by the same hand; and it would seem as though it had been added after the stone was fixed in its place. This suppression of the title of martyr could hardly have been necessary as an act of prudence, since neither the tombstone in this Cemetery of St. Cornelius, who suffered in the same persecution, nor that of St. Hyacinth in the Cemetery of St. Hermes, observed the same reticence. De Rossi points out that even in those early days it was not lawful to publish this claim on the veneration of the faithful without the sanction of the highest authority, which, in the present instance, was delayed for eighteen months, in consequence of the Holy See remaining vacant during that period; in other words, though actually a martyr, St. Fabian was not at once a martyr *vindicatus*.[1] The fragmentary condition in which all these monuments have been found does not allow us to say whether the title of martyr was given to the other Popes whose names we see on the gravestones; but the examples we have quoted would lead us to expect that it was.



Between St. Fabian and St. Lucius intervened St. Cornelius, of whose burial we shall have to speak in another chapter. Of St. Lucius we have seen the gravestone, where, however, his name is written ΛΟΥΚΙϹ, not ΛΟΥΚΙΟ . This elliptic form of termination of a Roman name was one which belonged rather to private than public use; yet it is found on some

Lucius.

[1] Optatus *de Schism. Donat.* i. 16, tells us of Lucilla, a Christian matron, who incurred the censures of the Church for having kissed at holy communion the relics *nescio cujus hominis mortui et si martyris necdum vindicati.* St. Cyprian is not satisfied with merely private information upon so important a matter as the death of the martyrs. He asks for an official communication, "*ut commemorationes eorum inter memorias martyrum celebrare possimus.*"—Ep. 37.

Pagan monuments of about this date, on many graves in the Jewish cemetery, and is quite universal in the Catacombs. Another example of it may be seen on a monument still lying in its place in the pavement of this very chapel within the altar rails, where ΔHMETPIC stands for Demetrius.

C.I.L., i. p. 210.

Eutychianus.

The next Pope of whom the tombstone has been discovered among the *débris* of this chapel is St. Eutychianus; nevertheless it is recorded of three out of the four who intervened between St. Lucius and himself that they also were buried here, and there is no reason to question the truth of the record.

Sixtus II.

Indeed, of one of them, St. Sixtus, we have seen numerous and authentic memorials in the *graffiti* already examined. He was, *par excellence*, the martyr of this Catacomb, and of the Catacombs generally; for we have the contemporary evidence of St. Cyprian [1] that he received the crown of martyrdom in one of them on the 6th of August A.D. 258. We have given the history of his martyrdom in a former chapter,[2] and the inscription by which Pope Damasus honoured his tomb in this place. The inscription does not mention the name of the Pope whose martyrdom it celebrates; and hence the whole history has been transferred in a document of the ninth century—for what reason we cannot now determine—from St. Sixtus to his predecessor, St. Stephen, who was himself also a martyr. We cannot doubt, however, that De Rossi is right in reclaiming it for St. Sixtus, partly on the strength of the contemporary testimony of St. Cyprian already quoted, partly on that of the *graffiti* at the doorway and elsewhere in the neighbourhood of this subterranean sanctuary, showing the marked pre-eminence in which the memory of St. Sixtus was held in reverence here from the very earliest times; and still more, perhaps, after following him through a critical examina-

The history of his martyrdom transferred to St. Stephen.

[1] "Xistum *in cimiterio* animadversum sciatis octavo Iduum Augustarum die et cum eo diaconos quatuor."—*S. Cyp.* Ep. lxxx., *ad Successum.*, ed. Leipsic, 1858.

[2] See page 150.

tion of all the notices on the subject which have come down to us in the Martyrologies, Itineraries, and other ancient *monumenta* of Church history, which are too minute, however, to be handled in this place.

There was probably no more difficulty about the burial of St. Sixtus in Rome than there was in Carthage about the burial of St. Cyprian. The African bishop had been martyred because he had broken the law; yet his body was given up to his friends and borne in triumph by torchlight through the streets to the *area* of Macrobius Candidianus. The bodies of St. Sixtus and of some of his companions in martyrdom were laid in peace in the Papal Crypt; so also was the body of his successor, St. Dionysius, though no memorial of him or vestige of his tomb has come to light. De Rossi has observed that whenever the "Liber Pontificalis" records of a Pope simply that he was buried in *Cœmeterio Callixti Viâ Appiâ*, it is the Papal Crypt that is spoken of. The burial-places of Eusebius, Cornelius, or any others buried in this cemetery, but outside this particular chamber, are described as being *in Cœmeterio Callixti in cryptâ*, or *in arenariâ juxta S. Callixtum*, or with some similar adjunct. But the simpler phrase is the one used about the burial of Dionysius; so also of Eutychianus, and we have seen his epitaph; of Caius, too, who succeeded Eutychianus; his tombstone, however, was not found in this chamber, but in another area of the cemetery at some little distance.[1]

Dionysius.

Caius.

Caius was succeeded by Marcellinus; and we have already seen proof of the exercise of his jurisdiction over this cemetery; for it was just opposite the Crypt of Eusebius that the Deacon Severus made his *cubiculum duplex jussu papæ sui Marcellini*.[2] Nevertheless, neither Marcellinus nor his successor, St. Marcellus, was buried here; they were both buried

[1] See the interesting history of its recovery in the "Epitaphs of the Catacombs," pp. 50–53.

[2] See page 149.

in the Cemetery of St. Priscilla, on the Via Salara. The cause of this change is at once explained by reference to the history of the times. Diocletian had now confiscated all the cemeteries that were known, and the *fiscus* had taken possession of them; free use, therefore, of the most public and notorious of all the Catacombs was no longer possible. Not only would the Christians cease to assemble and to bury there, but it is probable also that precautions would be taken to protect so precious a sanctuary as the sepulchre of the Popes from falling into the hands of the heathen. It would have been easy to do this either by blocking up the approaches by means of earth taken from the adjacent galleries, or in some other way; and it is a curious coincidence, or rather an almost convincing proof of the accuracy of this conjecture, that Michele De Rossi had been persuaded—merely by an examination of the monuments of the place from an architectural point of view—that all the galleries in the immediate neighbourhood of this *sanctum sanctorum* were actually blocked up in this way, during some time or other in the ages of persecution. He can even point to the staircase in the tufa, whose lower steps were all cut off, thereby rendering the whole inaccessible.[1]

Traces of the Diocletian persecution.

Moreover, this explains to us why the next two Popes, Eusebius and Melchiades, though buried in the Cemetery of Callixtus after its restoration to the Christians, yet did not occupy graves in the Papal vault, but lay each in his own crypt apart. Maxentius did not indeed restore the *loca ecclesiastica* until after the death of Eusebius; but that Pontiff died an exile in Sicily, and his body was only brought back to Rome some years afterwards by his successor, just as Pontian's had been by Fabian. It was then buried in a very fine crypt, of which we shall have to speak presently. Melchiades, too, we are told by some of the ancient authorities, was buried in another separate crypt; and although we

Eusebius and

Melchiades the last Popes buried in this Catacomb.

[1] See page 155.

cannot now with any certainty identify it, it is not unlikely that it is the one pointed out by De Rossi, and that the top or cover of the sarcophagus in which he lay may be that which is still to be seen there. Plan, V. a_3.

With Eusebius the long succession of martyred Popes comes to a close; Melchiades lived and died in peace, and a new era opens in the history of Christianity from Pope Sylvester. New customs are now of necessity introduced, or old ones are at least considerably modified. Christian sepulchres are made quite freely above ground; small Basilicas or mausoleums are erected for the purpose; and we have already seen that Sylvester himself, Mark, Julius, and even Damasus, were all buried in oratories of this kind, placed near the entrance of the Catacombs, but not within them. Our history, therefore, of the Papal Crypt, as a place of burial of the Popes, is now complete, and we may proceed to examine the other inscriptions which De Rossi has restored here. There are two, both by Pope Damasus; one has been already published in these pages, relating the history of the martyrdom of St. Sixtus, and we know with certainty where it stood, because a very few fragments of it still adhere to the wall where the whole was originally fixed. It has been also stated, with reference to the other, that it was found in this same chamber, broken into more than 120 fragments, and it does not seem possible to find any other place for it than that which De Rossi has given it. We here present it to our readers, that they may have it before them whilst we proceed to comment upon its details; but we must refer them for a facsimile of its present condition to Plate V. at the end of our volume.

Inscriptions of Pope Damasus examined in detail.

HIC CONGESTA JACET QUÆRIS SI TURBA PIORUM,
CORPORA SANCTORUM RETINENT VENERANDA SEPULCHRA,
SUBLIMES ANIMAS RAPUIT SIBI REGIA CŒLI:
HIC COMITES XYSTI PORTANT QUI EX HOSTE TROPÆA;
HIC NUMERUS PROCERUM[1] SERVAT QUI ALTARIA CHRISTI;

[1] "Hic Petrus, hic Paulus *proceres*."—*Paulin.*, Poem. xxiii. in Nat.

HIC POSITUS LONGÂ VIXIT QUI IN PACE SACERDOS;
HIC CONFESSORES SANCTI QUOS GRÆCIA MISIT;
HIC JUVENES, PUERIQUE, SENES CASTIQUE NEPOTES,
QUÏS MAGE VIRGINEUM PLACUIT RETINERE PUDOREM.
HIC FATEOR DAMASUS VOLUI MEA CONDERE MEMBRA,
SED CINERES TIMUI SANCTOS VEXARE PIORUM.

"Here, if you would know, lie heaped together a whole crowd of Saints.
These honoured sepulchres enclose the bodies of the saints,
Their noble souls the palace of Heaven has taken to itself.
Here lie the companions of Xystus, who bear away the trophies from the enemy;
Here a number of elders, who guard the altars of Christ;
Here is buried the Bishop,[1] who lived in a long peace;
Here the holy Confessors whom Greece sent us;
Here lie youths and boys, old men, and their chaste offspring,
Who chose, as the better part, to keep their virgin chastity.
Here I, Damasus, confess I wished to lay my bones,
But I feared to disturb the holy ashes of the Saints."

Number of martyrs not improbable.

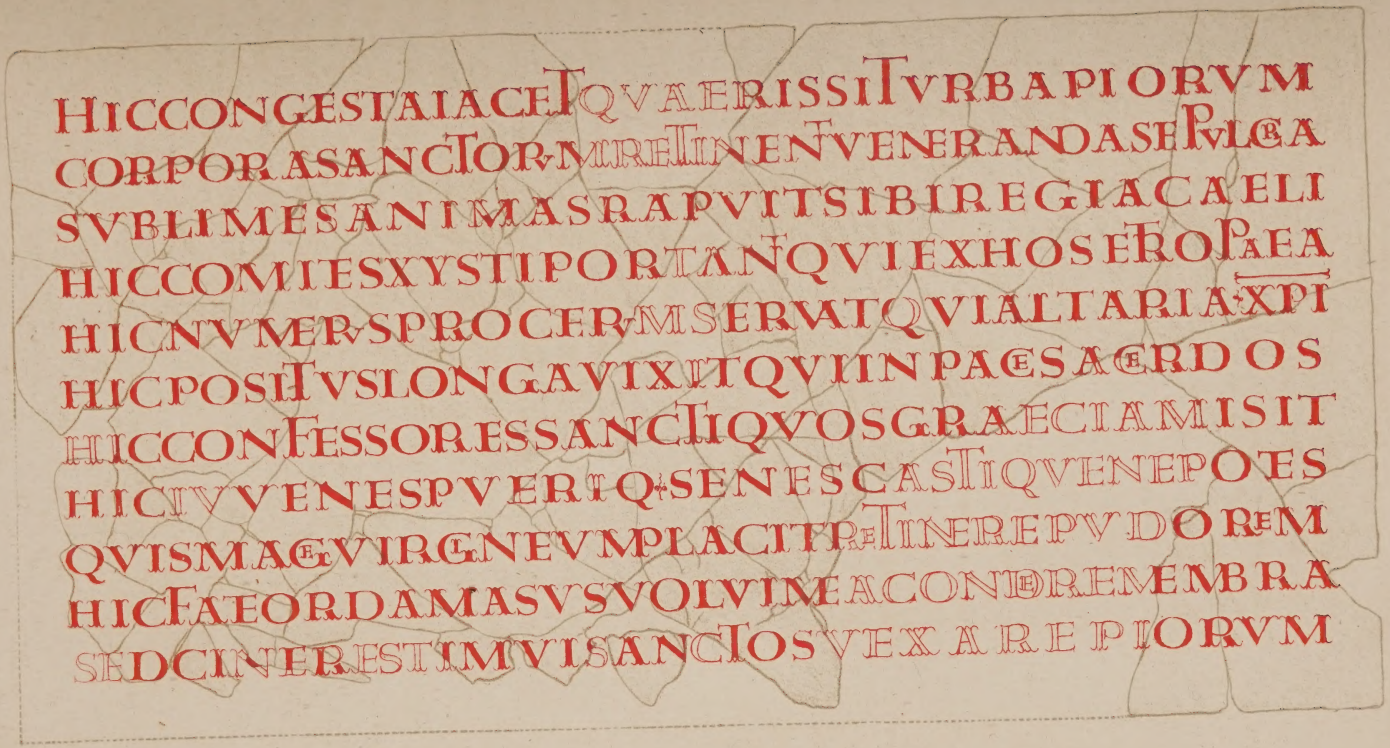
In the first line, the poet seems to allude to a number of martyrs laid together in one large tomb (*polyandrium*), such as we know, from Prudentius,[2] were to be seen in some parts of the Roman Catacombs; and we learn from the Martyrologies and other old documents that there were four groups of many martyrs buried somewhere near to the tombs of St. Sixtus and St. Cecilia. They numbered 27, 48, 800, and 4000; other documents, or other copies of the same, read 80, or 880, instead of 800, and speak vaguely of several thousands instead of four only. All the authorities agree in placing the burial of these large numbers of martyrs in a cemetery on the Via Appia, and the tombs of the 800 and of the 48 are named as having been in immediate juxtaposition to the tomb of St. Cecilia. Now it happens that in a corner of the Papal Crypt, where (as we shall presently see) it touches the Crypt of St.

Felicis, line 135. It is a title of dignity, and suitably used for the bishops, *i.e.*, the Popes who were buried here.

[1] *Sacerdos* was used for bishop in the Roman Church at this time. St. Ambrose (Ep. 56) speaks of the Pope Siricius as "Romanæ sacerdotem Ecclesiæ."

[2] Peristeph., xi. 1–17.

HICCONGESTAIACETQVAERISSITVRBAPIORVM
CORPORASANCTORVMRETINENTVENERANDASEPVLCRA
SVBLIMESANIMASRAPVITSIBIREGIACAELI
HICCOMIESXYSTIPORTANTQVIEXHOSETROPAEA
HICNVMERVSPROCERVMSERVATQVIALTARIA·XPI
HICPOSITVSLONGAVIXITQVIINPACESACERDOS
HICCONFESSORESSANCTIQVOSGRAECIAMISIT
HICIVVENESPVERIQ·SENESCASTIQVENEPOTES
QVISMAGVIRGINEVMPLACITRETINEREPVDOREM
HICFAEORDAMASVSVOLVIMEACONDEREMEMBRA
SEDCINERESTIMVISANCTOSVEXAREPIORVM



Cecilia, is a pit of extraordinary depth, apparently intended for the burial of many bodies, certainly capable of receiving the charred remains of a very large number of victims. May not these "undesigned coincidences" be accepted as some evidence of the truth of the statements we have quoted, as to the number of martyrs buried in this place, *congesta turba piorum?* At any rate, it will be worth while to consider the subject somewhat attentively.

It is common with a certain class of writers contemptuously to set these statements aside as manifestly absurd exaggerations; and yet the language of Prudentius is precise, and an accurate knowledge of the laws and customs of Pagan Rome predisposes us to accept it as a literal statement of the truth.[1] Prudentius supposes his friend to have asked him the names of those who had shed their blood for the faith in Rome, and the epitaphs (*tituli*) inscribed on their tombs. He replies that it would be very difficult to do this, for that the relics of the saints of Rome are innumerable; that so long as the city continued to worship their Pagan gods, their wicked rage slew vast multitudes of the just. On many tombs, indeed, he says, you may read the name of the martyr, and some short inscription, but there are also many others which are silent as to the name, and only express the number. "You can ascertain the number which lie heaped up together" (*congestis corpora acervis*), but nothing more;[2] and he specifies in particular one grave, in which he learnt that the relics of sixty martyrs had been laid, whose names were known only to Christ, as being His special friends.

Let us put side by side with this a narrative from the Annals of Tacitus,[3] and we shall be satisfied that such wholesale butchery of those whom the law condemned was by no means

[1] "Numerari non possunt martyres Christi," says St. Cyprian, de Exhort. Mart. c. xi. See also Euseb. H. E., viii. 9.

[2] Prud. Peristeph., xi. 9.

[3] Tac. An., xiv. 43–45.

improbable. It was provided by the ancient law of Rome that, if a master was ever murdered by his slave, all his fellow-slaves were to suffer death together with the culprit. Such a murder happened in the year A.D. 62, of one Pedanius Secundus, who had lately been the Prefect of the city, and who was the master of four hundred slaves. The innocence of the great majority of these slaves was notorious, and this, coupled with the unusual number of the victims, created a considerable excitement among the people. The matter was discussed in the Senate, and some of its members ventured to express compassion, and to deprecate the rigorous execution of the law. It was decided, however, apparently by a very large majority, that the law should take its course (*nihil mutandum*); and when the people threatened violence, the troops were called out, the whole line of road was guarded by them, and the unhappy four hundred were put to death at once. Tacitus has recorded the speech of one of those who took the chief part in the debate, and his language and arguments are precisely those which we can imagine to have been used again and again in the second and third centuries by orators persuading a general persecution of the Christians. "Now that we have nations amongst us," said Cassius, "who have different rites and ceremonies, foreign religions, or perhaps no religion at all, it is impossible to keep such a rabble (*conluviem istam*) under restraint in any other way than by fear. True, indeed, some innocent persons will perish with the guilty. But, wherever it is necessary to make some striking example of severity for the public good, there will be always incidental injustice to certain individuals."

Nor is this the only testimony that could be alleged bearing upon this point. In the inscription of Ancyra, Augustus says that after the defeat of Pompey he restored 30,000 slaves to their masters to be put to death for having run away and taken arms against the Republic. When Spartacus, A.D. 24, had been conquered, Crassus set up 6000 crosses along

the road from Capua to Rome for the execution of the prisoners.[1]

Among a people accustomed to scenes of this kind, there would have been nothing to excite any extraordinary feelings in the massacre of whole families or congregations of obstinate Christians; and there is no reason, therefore, why we should misdoubt the testimony of Eusebius, who says[2] that the soldiers surrounded a Christian town in Phrygia, and burnt it with all its inhabitants, "men, women, and children, calling upon the name of Christ, the God of all." He also says that when he was in Egypt he himself saw a crowd in one day, some beheaded, some burnt, but all inspired with the greatest ardour, "receiving the award of death with joy and gaiety, singing hymns and returning thanks to their last breath;"[3] and he declares that such cruelties were perpetrated not for a short time, but for several years; that ten, twenty, thirty, sixty, and as many as a hundred men, women, and children, would be slain in a day by various tortures. Let us add to this the testimony of Lactantius, or the author of "De Mortibus Persecutorum," who was at least a contemporary witness of what he describes, and who tells us that when the number of Christians condemned was very great, they were not executed singly, but surrounded by fire on all sides, and thus burnt together (*gregatim comburebantur*).[4] We learn from the lawyer Ulpian[5] that as the law allowed the bodies of criminals who had been beheaded to be given up to their relatives who asked for them, so where the capital sentence had been executed by fire, it allowed the relatives to come to the spot and gather up any bones or ashes that might remain. This distinction being thus specified in the law, shows clearly that death by burning was no uncommon mode of punishment, and taken together with

[1] Appian, de Bello Civili, i. 120.
[2] H. E., viii. 11.
[3] Ibid., c. 9.
[4] Chap. xv. See also Divin. Instit., v. ii.; and Euseb., H. E., viii. 2.
[5] Digest., xlviii. Tit., xxiv.

the testimony of Lactantius, it suggests to us how it was possible for the relics of so many to have been buried in one grave. On the whole, therefore, we conclude that there seems to be no solid reason for calling in question the truth of what ancient authorities generally have told us on this subject, however difficult it may be, in this or that particular instance, to verify the number recorded.

Deacons of St. Sixtus.

The inscription of Damasus next commemorates the companions of St. Sixtus, and the many Popes who had been buried in this chapel. The companions of St. Sixtus were two of his deacons, the two others having been buried in the Cemetery of Prætextatus, and of the Popes we have given a full account separately; nor will our readers have any difficulty in recognising St. Melchiades in the bishop who is commemorated in the sixth line as having "enjoyed a long life of peace" after the persecutions had ceased.

For "the confessors sent from Greece," we must turn to various old documents, in which we shall find the names of a Greek family of martyrs buried in an *arenarium* near the Cemetery of Callixtus. Their names were Hippolytus, Adrias, Maria, Neo, and Paulina; and we shall give some account of them in the last chapter of this Book.

Greek Martyrs.

Of "the young men and maidens, the old men and boys," recorded in the last lines of St. Damasus' catalogue, nothing sufficiently distinct is mentioned to enable us to attempt their identification with any particular corps of the noble army of martyrs; very probably the poet himself had no such identification present to his own mind, but only intended to give a general reference to the many other martyrs who lay buried in the cemetery, besides the more distinguished few whom he had specified. And then he concludes with those touching lines which, whilst they testify both to his humility and his devotion to the Saints, throw valuable light upon the history of the Catacombs.[1]

[1] See p. 175.

Lost tablet of Sixtus III.

And now, at length, we may take our leave of the Papal Crypt. But as we turn our backs on the altar to go out by the door by which we entered, we see the impress on the plaster over the doorway of a large slab of stone or marble, which was once secured there, and we remember that the "Liber Pontificalis" tells us of the next Pontiff who took the name of Sixtus (Sixtus III., A.D. 432–440), that "he made here a *platonia*,"—*i.e.*, covered the chamber with marble, "and wrote the names of the bishops and martyrs to commemorate them." It is probable that his purpose was to supply the omissions of Pope Damasus, or rather to make his language more distinct and intelligible to a generation to whom the facts were not so familiar. Two generations had passed since the days of Damasus, and his allusions no longer sufficed to suggest the names. At any rate, Sixtus III. determined to put them plainly on record. What were "the names of the bishops and martyrs" which he wrote? Not a single fragment of the original inscription is in our hands. It is probable that no eye has seen it for a thousand years and more. Nevertheless, De Rossi has not shrunk from the seemingly hopeless task of recovering it.

In the absence of the original, we naturally turn to the copies made by scholars of the eighth and ninth centuries; but even these too seem here to fail us; at least it would have been so judged by anybody who had not the learning, the ingenuity, and the patience of a De Rossi. Let us see how he proceeds.

One of these collectors of epigraphs, after copying the Damasine inscription on which we have just been commenting, immediately adds a certain number of names (19 or 20), most of which belong to bishops who were known to have been buried in this cemetery. De Rossi detects a certain resemblance between this list and another to be found in the best copies of the "Martyrologium Hieronymianum" under date of the 9th of August. But this list in the Martyrology had

always proved an inextricable entanglement of names even to the most practised hagiologists. The Bollandists[1] had written that, "here if anywhere the MSS. of the ancient documents were hopelessly confused and wonderfully involved, so that nobody could satisfactorily unravel them;" and they added that a reference to the abridged copies of the Martyrology only made the darkness more hopelessly obscure.[2] De Rossi, however, comparing the list in the Martyrology with that in the collection of inscriptions, observed that, whereas the last ten names were the same in both, yet of the first ten every alternate name, the first, third, fifth, seventh, and ninth, was omitted in all copies of the Martyrology. He judged that this regularity of omission could hardly be fortuitous, and conjectured that, perhaps, the list of names had been originally arranged, not consecutively, but in columns,[3] and that the compilers of the Martyrology had somehow never seen, or had omitted to copy, the first column.

The reader will easily understand this if he will look at the conjectural restoration of Pope Sixtus' inscription as it is printed at the end of this chapter, and then call to mind that it is precisely the first column of names which is wanting in the Martyrologies. We have only to suppose that the tablet originally consisted of two or three slabs of marble, and that one of these had fallen from its place before the copy was made on which the Martyrology was founded; and the omission is at once accounted for. Moreover, this simple change in the arrangement of the names had a wonderful effect in producing some outline, at least, of order where all had been chaotic confusion before. It now appeared that, though the

[1] Acta SS. Aug., tom. ii. p. 411.

[2] Of the corrupt condition of the MSS. themselves, the following specimens may suffice:—MELCIADIS, STEPHANI appear as MELEI ADISI TEBASI; MANNOS and ANTEROS have to be recovered out of MEMINI SINTINI, &c.

[3] Such an arrangement would be eminently suitable for the oblong form of the space which the tablet was intended to fill.

Popes were not arranged in order of chronological succession, yet the first column contained the most famous, to whose memory there was the greatest devotion in connection with this cemetery in the days of Sixtus III.; the second column and the beginning of the third contained the names of other Popes, and the list concludes with the names of bishops who had occupied other sees but not filled the chair of Peter.

We cannot pursue the details of this subject any further in this place, but we earnestly recommend those of our readers who can appreciate the delight of following a delicate thread of argument through numberless obscurities, until at length it leads to the full light of conviction, to study for themselves the sixth chapter of the second volume of De Rossi's work, in which he will hardly know which most to admire, the varied learning or the marvellous ingenuity of the author. Here we can only add that, guided by solid reasons, he affirms that the 9th of August must have been a day intimately connected with the work of Sixtus III. in the Cemetery of St. Callixtus—the day of its completion or dedication, as the same Martyrology records on the 29th of June the dedication of the Baptistery of Constantine by this same Pope, though in truth he had only completed its internal decoration; on the 5th of August the dedication of St. Mary Major's, and on the 2d of November that of St. Laurence's, though these too had been built and received their first dedication long before his time. The inscription then set up by Pope Sixtus III. in this Papal Crypt probably stood thus:[1]—

NOMINA EPISCOPORUM MARTYRUM ET CONFESSORUM
QUI DEPOSITI SUNT IN CŒMETERIO CALLISTI

[1] Zephyrinus does not appear in this list, because his body had been already (from the time of St. Damasus) transferred from the subterranean crypt to a chapel on the soil above. De Rossi (R. S., ii. 48) says in conclusion, that the last two lines of his inscription are specially hypothetical; and, moreover, that an essential part of the inscription is still wanting—viz., the name of its author.

XYSTUS	DIONYSIUS	STEPHANUS	URBANUS
CORNELIUS	FELIX	LUCIUS	MANNO
PONTIANUS	EUTYCHIANUS	ANTEROS	NUMIDIANUS
FABIANUS	GAIUS	LAUDICEUS	JULIANUS
EUSEBIUS	MILTIADES	POLYCARPUS	OPTATUS

HORUM PRIMUS SANCTUS XYSTUS

PASSUS CUM AGAPITO FELICISSIMO ET ALIIS NUMERO XI.

CHAPTER IV.

CRYPT OF ST. CECILIA.

Crypt of St. Cecilia recovered and identified—Her Acts; her true history; translation of her relics in 821; *recovery of them in* 1579—*Detailed examination of the several ornaments of the crypt, inscriptions, paintings, mosaics—Date of her martyrdom—Who was the Bishop Urban connected with her history?*

Chapel of St. Cecilia.

A NARROW doorway, cut somewhat irregularly through the rock in the corner of the Papal Crypt, introduces us at once into another chamber. As we pass through this doorway, we observe that the sides were once covered with slabs of marble, and the arch over our heads adorned with mosaics. The first impression we receive from the chamber is one of strong contrast with that we have just left behind us. The room is much larger: it is nearly 20 feet square (the other had been only 14 by 11); it is irregular in shape, and has a wide *luminare* over it, completely flooding it with light, and on the other side of it there is a large portico supported by brick arches, which would have been, of course, the more important entrance to it; yet we see no altar-tomb, no contemporary epitaphs of Popes or martyrs, nor indeed anything else which at once engages our attention and promises to give us any valuable information. Perhaps a more careful examination may detect objects of interest still remaining on the walls; but if we would understand and enjoy them when they are found, it is necessary that our minds should first be stored with some knowledge of the history of St. Cecilia, before whose

Plan, III. O.

tomb we are. This confident statement may perhaps provoke a smile in some of our readers, who know that the sceptical criticism of the last century endeavoured to throw a doubt upon the existence of such a martyr; or would insist, at least, on transferring the scene of her history from Rome to Sicily. Moreover, we have just now seen the announcement of a French archbishop in the fifteenth century, bidding us venerate the grave of St. Cecilia in the cemetery at St. Sebastian's,

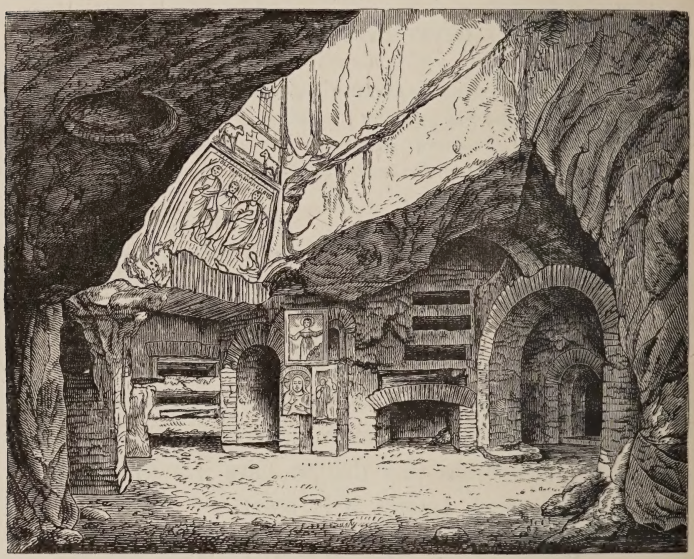


FIG. 31.—*Crypt of St. Cecilia.*

more than a quarter of a mile off. What fresh knowledge, then, has been gained since that time, which enables us not only to detect his error, but also to insist with confidence upon the correctness of our own assertion in its stead? And is there no danger of later critics rising up to set aside our judgment as peremptorily as we are setting aside those of our predecessors? We hope thoroughly to satisfy our readers on these questions before we leave this chapel; but first we must set before them, as we have said, some sketch of the legend of St. Cecilia.

History of St. Cecilia.

The Acts of her Martyrdom, as they have come down to us, cannot lay claim to any higher antiquity than the fifth century; and yet, though their corruption and interpolation be freely admitted, recent discoveries have proved that they are unquestionably true not only in their chief features, but also in many minute details which only a contemporary witness could have collected, and which no later copyist has altered. We shall, therefore, first give as much of the legend as is necessary for our purpose in its popular form, and then point out the few but important particulars in which sound criticism obliges us to correct them.

St. Cecilia, then, was a maiden of noble blood, born of parents of senatorial rank; the language of the Acts is most precise upon this point, using the exact technical words which distinguished her rank—*Ingenua*, *nobilis*, *clarissima*. She had been brought up a Christian from her earliest infancy, having probably a Christian mother. Her father, however, must have been a pagan, for the saint was given in marriage to a young patrician of very amiable and excellent dispositions, but a pagan, named Valerian. St. Cecilia had already consecrated herself by secret vow to the service of her Lord in the state of virginity; and on the day of her marriage she persuaded her husband to visit Pope Urban, lying hid in a cemetery on the Appian Way, by whom he was instructed and baptized. So also was his brother, Tiburtius. These two were presently martyred for refusing to offer sacrifice to the gods, and Maximus, the officer who presided at their execution, was so moved by their constancy, that he too was brought to the faith, and received the crown of martyrdom with them. They were all buried in the Catacomb of Prætextatus, where, as we have seen, the ancient pilgrims thought them worthy of special mention. Cecilia still lived, and as Almachius, the Prefect of the city, thought it best that her punishment should be as secret as possible, he ordered that she should be shut up in the *caldarium*, or room of the warm bath in her own palace, and

that the pipes with which the walls on all sides were perforated should be heated to such a degree as to cause suffocation. Instances of this kind of secret execution are common in Roman history, whenever it was thought desirable, for any reason, to avoid publicity.

Her martyrdom and burial.

Cecilia entered the room appointed her; the furnace was heated "seven times more than it was wont to be heated;" she remained there for a whole day and night, yet at the end of the time it was found that, as with the Three Children in the fiery furnace, so now with this virgin, "the fire had no power over her body, nor was a hair of her head singed, neither were her garments changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on her." No sweat stood upon her brow, no lassitude oppressed her limbs, but she was sound and whole as at the beginning. When this unlooked-for intelligence was conveyed to the Prefect, he sent one of the lictors with orders to strike off her head. He found her in the very room of her victory, and proceeded at once to accomplish his errand. Three times did the axe fall upon her tender neck, inflicting deep and mortal wounds; but whether it was that the sight of so young and noble a victim unnerved the heart of the executioner, or whether his hand was supernaturally stayed by the hand of God, certain it is that his work was not complete, and as the law did not allow more than three strokes to be given, he went away, leaving her yet alive, though bathed in her own blood. The manner of death having been thus changed, it was no longer necessary that the door of the chamber in which she lay should be kept closed; and as soon, therefore, as the executioner had withdrawn, the faithful of her house and neighbourhood flocked in to receive the last breath of the dying martyr. They found her stretched upon the marble pavement, calmly awaiting the moment of her release, and as they crowded round her, dipping their handkerchiefs or any other piece of linen they could find in her sacred blood, that they might reverently collect it all as blood that had been

spilt for the love of Jesus and was therefore precious in His sight, she spoke to all according to their several needs. For two days and nights she continued in this state, hovering, as it were, between life and death; and on the third morning the venerable Pope Urban—it is necessary again to remind our readers that we are only repeating what is written in the Acts—came to bid farewell to his beloved daughter. "I have prayed," she said, "that I might not die during these three days, until I had first had an opportunity of recommending to your Blessedness"—the title by which the Popes were then addressed, just as we now address them as "your Holiness"—"the poor, whom I have always nourished, and of giving you this house, to the intent that it may be made a church for ever." The bishop had no sooner signified his assent to her dying requests, and given her his blessing, than, turning her face towards the ground, and letting her arms and hands fall gently together upon her right side, she breathed forth her pure spirit, and passed into the presence of her God. That same evening her body was placed in a rough coffin of cypress-wood,[1] just in the attitude in which she had died; and Urban and his deacons bore it out of the city into the Cemetery of St. Callixtus, where he buried her in a chamber "near his own colleagues, the bishops and martyrs."

Body of St. Cecilia translated by Paschal I., A.D. 821.

Such is the legend of St. Cecilia's martyrdom. The history of her relics is still more remarkable, and equally important to our narrative. Pope Paschal I. succeeded to the see of Peter in January A.D. 817, and in the following July he translated into different churches in the city the relics of 2300 martyrs, collected from the various suburban cemeteries, which at that time were lying in a deplorable state of ruin. Amongst the relics thus removed were those of the Popes from the Papal

[1] The use of a coffin was very unusual among the early Christians, at least among those who were buried in the Catacombs; nevertheless, there are arguments which oblige us to believe that one was used on this occasion.

Crypt we have just described. His contemporary biographer, writing in the "Liber Pontificalis," tells us that Paschal had wished to remove at the same time the relics of St. Cecilia, but he could not discover her tomb; so at length he reluctantly acquiesced in the report that her body had been carried off by Astulfus, the Lombard king by whom Rome had been besieged and these cemeteries plundered.[1] Some four years afterwards, however, St. Cecilia appeared to him in a dream or vision, as he was assisting on his throne at Matins in the Vatican Basilica,[2] and told him that when he was translating the bodies of the Popes, she was so close to him that they might have conversed together. In consequence of this vision he returned to the search, and found the body where he had been told. It was fresh and perfect as when it was first laid in the tomb, and clad in rich garments mixed with gold, with linen cloths stained with blood rolled up at her feet, lying in a cypress coffin.

Paschal himself tells us that he lined the coffin with fringed silk, spread over the body a covering of silk gauze, and then, placing it in the same attitude in which he had found it within a sarcophagus of white marble, deposited it under the high altar of the Church of Sta. Cecilia in Trastevere.

Found incorrupt A.D. 1599.

Nearly eight hundred years afterwards, A.D. 1599, Cardinal Sfondrati, of the *title* of St. Cecilia, made considerable alterations in the church, and in course of his excavations in the sanctuary he came upon a wide vault beneath the altar. Two marble sarcophagi met his eyes. Trustworthy witnesses were summoned, and in their presence one of these sarcophagi was opened. It was found to contain a coffin of cypress-wood. The cardinal himself drew back the coffin lid. First appeared the precious lining and silk gauze with which Paschal had

[1] See p. 252.

[2] This vision forms the subject of an old fresco, some fragments of which may still be seen at the end of the Church of Sta. Cecilia in Trastevere.

covered the body nearly eight centuries before. Its colour had faded, but the fabric was still entire, and through its transparent folds could be seen the shining gold of the robes in which the martyr herself was clothed. After pausing a few moments, the Cardinal gently removed this silken covering, and the virgin form of St. Cecilia appeared in the very same attitude in which she had breathed her last on the pavement of the house in which the spectators were then standing, and which neither Urban nor Paschal had ventured to disturb. She lay clothed in her robes of golden tissue, on which were still visible the glorious stains of her blood, and at her feet were the linen cloths mentioned by Pope Paschal and his biographer. Lying on her right side, with her arms extended in front of her body, she looked like one in a deep sleep. Her head, in a singularly touching manner, was turned round towards the bottom of the coffin; her knees were slightly bent, and drawn together. The body was perfectly incorrupt, and by a special miracle retained, after more than thirteen hundred years, all its grace and modesty, and recalled with the most truthful exactness Cecilia breathing forth her soul on the pavement of her bath.[1]

A more signal vindication of the Church's traditions; a more consoling spectacle for a devout Catholic, mourning over the schisms and heresies of those miserable times; a more striking commentary on the Divine promise, "The Lord keepeth all the bones of His servants; He will not lose one of them!"[2] it would be difficult to conceive. One is not surprised at the profound sensation which the intelligence of this discovery created in the Eternal City.

Pope Clement VIII., at that time sick at Frascati, deputed Cardinal Baronius[3] to make a careful examination of the pre-

[1] De Rossi has himself assisted at the translation of a body from an ancient Christian cemetery on the Via Appia to a church two miles distant, lying on the marble slab on which it was found inside a sarcophagus, without the least displacement of a single bone.—*R. S.*, ii. 127.

[2] Psalm xxxiii. 21.

[3] Annales, ad. ann. 821, xv. xvi.

cious remains, and both he and Bosio[1] have left accounts of what they witnessed. All Rome came to satisfy its curiosity and devotion for the space of four or five weeks, during which the virgin martyr lay exposed for veneration; and when the tomb was again closed, on St. Cecilia's day, the Pope himself sang the Mass. Cardinal Sfondrati erected the beautiful high-altar which now stands over the Saint's tomb, and beneath it he placed a statue by Maderna, who had frequently seen the body, as the inscription intimates.

"EN TIBI SANCTISSIMÆ VIRGINIS CÆCILIÆ IMAGINEM QUAM IPSE INTEGRAM IN SEPULCHRO JACENTEM VIDI, EANDEM TIBI PRORSUS EODEM CORPORIS SITU HOC MARMORE EXPRESSI."

"Behold the image of the most holy Virgin Cecilia, whom I myself saw lying incorrupt in her tomb. I have in this marble expressed for thee the same Saint in the very same posture of body."

FIG. 32.—*Maderna's Statue of St. Cecilia.*

An engraving also was published at the same time—a few copies of which may yet be found in foreign libraries (*e.g.*, at Carpentras, among the MSS. of Peiresc, a contemporary)—with the inscription, *Hoc habitu inventa est.*

It has no special bearing upon our subject, yet we cannot refrain from adding, that in the other sarcophagus which we mentioned as having been found by Cardinal Sfondrati, and which, according to the tradition, ought to have contained the bodies of Saints Tiburtius, Valerian, and Maximus (translated from the Cemetery of Prætextatus), the remains of three bodies

[1] Hist. Pass. S. Cæciliæ, pp. 155-170.

were seen, two of which, apparently of the same age and size, had manifestly been beheaded, whilst the skull of the third was broken, and the abundant hair upon it was thickly matted with blood, as though the martyr had been beaten to death by those *plumbatæ* or leaded scourges of which Prudentius and others tell us, and of which a specimen has been found in the Cemetery of Callixtus (III. 2_1) even in our own times, and which the Acts of St. Cecilia's martyrdom distinctly state to have been the instrument of the death of St. Maximus. *R.S.*, ii. 164.

Critical examination of the crypt.

We must now confront the whole of this marvellous narrative with the actual monuments of the cemetery, so far as they still exist, and can be made to throw any light upon it. We have seen that the Acts assert that Pope Urban had buried the Virgin Martyr near to his own colleagues. Both the Itineraries to which we have such frequent occasion to refer mention her grave immediately before or immediately after those of the Popes. Pope Paschal says that he found her body quite close to the place whence he had withdrawn the bodies of his saintly predecessors. Are all these topographical notices true or false? This is the question which must have agitated the mind of De Rossi when he discovered that there was a second chamber immediately contiguous to that in which the Popes had been buried, and we may easily imagine the eagerness with which he longed to penetrate it. But this could not be done at once. The chapel was full of earth, even to the very top of the *luminare*, and all this soil must first be removed through the *luminare* itself. As the work of excavation proceeded, there came to light, first, on the wall of the *luminare*, the figure of a woman in the usual attitude of prayer, but of this both the outlines and colour were too indistinct to enable him to identify it. Below this there appeared a Latin cross between two sheep. These also were much faded. Still lower down the wall—the wall, that is, of the *luminare*, not of the chamber itself—he came upon the figures of three saints, executed apparently in the fourth, or perhaps even the fifth

Its discovery and excavation by De Rossi.

Paintings in the *luminare*,

century; but they were all of men, and their names, inscribed at the side, showed no trace of any connection with the history of St. Cecilia. They were Policamus, whose martyrdom was proclaimed by a palm branch springing up by his side; Sabastianus and Curinus, this last having his head tonsured with the *corona* usually found on clerical portraits of that period (and therefore not to be confounded with Quirinus, the martyred tribune whom we have met with in the Cemetery of Prætextatus). De Rossi had never had any reason to expect

FIG. 33.—*Fresco of St. Cecilia on the Wall of her Crypt.*

a representation of either of these saints near the tomb of St. Cecilia. It will save us from some embarrassment, therefore, if we postpone what we have to say about them for the present, and proceed with our work of clearance of the whole chamber.

and on the wall of the crypt.

As we come nearer to the floor, we find upon the wall, close to the entrance from the burial-place of the Popes, a painting which may be attributed, perhaps, to the seventh century, of a woman, richly attired, with pearls entwined in her hair and

suspended from her ears; necklaces and bracelets of gold and pearls; a white dress covered with a pink tunic, ornamented with gold and silver flowers, and large roses springing out of the ground by her feet. Everything about the painting is rich and bright, and gay, such as an artist might picture to himself that a Roman bride of wealth and noble blood, like St. Cecilia, ought to have been. Below this figure, we come to a niche such as is found at so many other shrines in the Catacombs, to receive the large shallow vessel of oil, or precious unguents,

FIG. 34.—*Fresco of Bust of our Lord in the Crypt of St. Cecilia.*

which, in ancient times, were used to feed the lamps burning before the tombs of the martyrs. At the back of this niche is a large head of our Lord, represented according to the Byzantine type, and with rays of glory in the form of a Greek cross. Side by side with this, but on the flat surface of the wall, is a figure of a bishop, in full pontifical dress, with his name inscribed, S. VRBANVS.

Examination of these paintings shows that they were not the first ornaments with which this place was decorated. The

Signs of more ancient decorations.

figure of St. Cecilia is painted on the surface of ruined mosaic work, portions of which may still be easily detected towards the bottom of the picture; and the niche in which our Lord's head is painted bears evident traces of having once been encased with porphyry. Both the head of Christ and the figure of St. Urban are so rudely done that they might have been executed as late as the tenth or eleventh century. The continued renewal of ornamentation in any part of the Catacombs, especially if prolonged beyond the fifth or sixth centuries, is a sure mark of high religious and historical interest attaching to that particular spot; and when we add that immediately by the side of these paintings is a deep recess in the wall, capable of receiving a large sarcophagus, and that between the back of this recess, and the back of one of the papal graves in the adjoining chamber, there is scarcely an inch of rock, we think the most sceptical of critics will confess that we have here certainly recovered a lost thread of tradition, and may claim to have discovered the original resting-place of one of the most ancient and famous of Rome's virgin saints.

Here was the original tomb of St. Cecilia.

It will be asked, however, if this is really the place where St. Cecilia was buried, and if Paschal really visited the adjoining chapel, how is it possible that he could have had any difficulty in finding her tomb? To this we may reply by reminding our readers of the condition in which the Catacombs were at that time. These translations of relics were being made, because the cemeteries in which they lay were utterly ruined. Moreover, it is possible that the doorway, or the recess, or both, may have been walled up or otherwise concealed, for the express purpose of baffling the search of the sacrilegious Lombards. Nor is this mere conjecture. Among the *débris* of this spot De Rossi has found several fragments of a wall, too thin ever to have been used as a means of support, but manifestly serviceable as a curtain of concealment; and, although, with that perfect candour and truthfulness which so enhances all his other merits, he adds that these fragments

bear tokens of belonging to a later date, this does not show that there had not been another wall of the same kind at an earlier period. Moreover, he is able to quote from his own discoveries the instance of an *arcosolium* in the Catacomb of Prætextatus thus carefully concealed by the erection of a wall. We have already had occasion to mention it in page 134.

However, be the true explanation of this difficulty what it may, our ignorance on this point cannot be allowed to outweigh the explicit testimony of Paschal, and the abundant corroborations which it receives both from ancient and modern sources. Not the least important among these is the number of epitaphs that have been found here belonging to the Cæcilii and other noble families connected with them by ties of blood or marriage: twelve or thirteen, all of Cæcilii or Cæciliani, and all enjoying high rank, have come to light from the Crypt of Lucina and the two first *areæ* of the Cemetery of Callixtus; and the *columbarium* of the freedmen and slaves of the Cæcilii was discovered in this neighbourhood in 1820.

Evidence of this from inscriptions, *R.S.*, i. 169. *Bull.*, 1872, 66, 67.

We know that it was the custom of the dependants of a great family to have their sepulchres as near as possible to the sepulchres of their *patronus*. We cannot doubt, then, that this cemetery was originally the private property of the *gens Cæcilia*, and that the Saint herself, whom the Acts designate *nobilis* and *clarissima*, belonged to it. There is a gravestone even now lying in the pavement of this chamber which may be suspected of offering some testimony on the subject. It is to the memory of one Septimius Prætextatus Cæcilianus, a "servant of God, who had lived worthy [of his vocation] for three and thirty years," and exclaims at the end of them, "If I have served Thee, I shall not repent of it, and I will bless Thy name."[1] The names on this monument are very suggestive. The Itineraries tell us that the husband and brother-in-law of St. Cecilia were buried in the Catacomb of Prætextatus; and here we find a Prætextatus Cæcilianus privileged to have his

R.S., iii. 628.

[1] Epitaphs of the Catacombs, p. 104.

place of burial close to that of the Virgin Martyr herself. Does not this denote some connection between the families? so that, whereas St. Cecilia was privy to the movements of Urban, lying hid in the cemetery under her own property on one side of the road, she could also obtain burial for her husband and others in the Cemetery of Prætextatus on the other side?

and from the chapel itself.

Again, De Rossi is of opinion that we have distinct—we had almost said authentic and documentary—evidence of the translation of the Saint's relics on the walls of the chapel itself. If we examine closely the picture of St. Cecilia, we shall find it covered with a number of *graffiti*, which are easily divided into two classes. One class is quite irregular both as to place and style of writing, consisting only of the names of pilgrims who had visited the shrine, and several of these, either by name or express title, confess themselves to be strangers. Thus, one is named Hildebrandus, another is a Bishop Ethelred, another Lupo, and two others write themselves down Spaniards. The other class of *graffiti* is quite regular, arranged in four lines, and containing almost exclusively the names of priests: BENEDICTUS PRB., SERGIUS PRB., CRESCENTIUS INDIGNUS PRBT.; STEFANUS PRB., P. . . PRB., MA, BONIFACIUS PRB., LEO PRSB., JOANNES PRB. VESTER,[1] MERCURIUS . . . NDO SCRINIARIUS. After the name of Leo is written in smaller letters ADEODATA MATER EJUS.

There is something about this list of names and their arrangement which suggests the idea of an official act. A number of priests, one of them the priest from St. Cecilia's Church in Rome, accompanied by a secretary, all subscribing regularly and with the adjunct of their official titles, the secretary signing last; only one lady is allowed to assist, and she having obtained this privilege, apparently, by virtue of her near relationship to one of the priests. Moreover, several of the same names appear on the painting of St. Cornelius, presently to be

[1] *i.e.*, of *title* of St. Cecilia.

visited in this same Catacomb, whence his body was translated some forty years before St. Cecilia's. Some of them appear also on a painting of the ninth century, made at the expense of a priest, Leo, and lately discovered in the subterranean San Clemente; and others again in the subscriptions to the decrees of a Roman Council, held A.D. 826. Of course, some of the names are very common, such as Leo, Benedictus, Stefanus, and Joannes; and the mere repetition of these would not suffice to raise a suspicion of identity; but when such names as George and Mercury appear, and are signed in both instances with the same peculiarity of writing (some letters having been made square, others written in a running hand), it cannot be rejected as an improbable conjecture that these men were among the leading parochial clergy of Rome, who attended the Pope in some official capacity, attesting the translation of relics in one instance, or signing the decrees of a Council in another. No *graffiti* of this kind or of the same age appear on the picture of St. Urbanus, which, as we have already seen, is of a much later date than that of St. Cecilia, and was, in fact, only added as an ornament to her sepulchre,—DECORI SEPVLCRI S. CÆCILIÆ MARTYRIS, says a half-obliterated scroll or tablet still remaining by its side,[1]—after her body had been removed; for the crosses which appear on the shoulders of the *pallium* were not in use before the tenth or eleventh century.

Verification and correction of the Acts of St. Cecilia.

It yet remains to say a few words about the history of St. Cecilia's martyrdom, with which we began. We have already acknowledged that the Acts are not genuine, and yet we have seen that in substance their accuracy has been marvellously confirmed by all that has since been discovered. The truth is, that these monuments in the Catacombs almost enable us to restore the Acts to their primitive form, by revealing the probable occasion of some of their present errors. For the chief difficulty that has always been urged against them concerns chronology. The Acts imply, or indeed directly assert, that

[1] Very few letters of this legend can now be recognised.

a furious persecution was raging at the time of St. Cecilia's death, and they speak of the edicts of the reigning *princes*, as though there were more than one; yet the mention of Pope Urban fixes the date to a time when Alexander Severus ruled the empire alone, and the Christians enjoyed tranquillity. The Martyrology of Ado, however, whilst still retaining the name of Urban, adds, with apparently unconscious inconsistency, that the Saint suffered in the times of Aurelius and Commodus, *i.e.*, nearly fifty years before that Pope. Whence did Ado obtain this particular item of his information, that the martyrdom of St. Cecilia belonged to the year 177 or thereabouts? This is what we cannot now tell, but we may be very certain that he derived it from some ancient authority which he trusted,[1] and if *we* trust it also, the difficulties it will solve are manifold. The language of the Acts now becomes consistent with the known facts of history. Not only were two princes reigning who hated and persecuted the Church, but the words of the judge as he pronounces sentence upon the martyrs are precisely equivalent to, are in fact a mere translation of, the very words in which Eusebius[2] has reported the edict of those Emperors, viz., that as many as should refuse to deny that they were Christians should be punished, but that if they denied the charge they should be at once dismissed.

First, in change of date.

Secondly, in change of bishop.

The chronological difficulty is now shifted from the emperors to the Pope. If St. Cecilia suffered A.D. 177, our readers will ask how she could have had anything to do with St. Urban. But they can also answer this question at once by calling to mind what has been already alluded to,[3] the existence of two bishops of the same name at various times; the one, Bishop of Rome, the other, bishop of some unknown see; the one, Pope

[1] Ado, who lived in the ninth century, tells us, in the Preface to his Martyrology, that he had collected MSS. of the Acts of the martyrs (*Passionum codices*) from all quarters, and had thus provided *compendiosam lectionem atque in parvo codicillo quod multo labore alii per plures codices exquirunt.*

[2] H. E., v. 1.

[3] See p. 142, and A. in Appendix.

and confessor, buried in Callixtus, the other, a martyr, buried in Prætextatus. We need only suppose that the earlier of these two bishops was resident in Rome during the episcopacy of St. Eleutherius, and occasionally acted for him during so severe a persecution, as we know that the Bishops Caldonius and Ercolanus acted at one time in Carthage for St. Cyprian.[1]

R.S., ii. 151. *Bull.*, 1872, 51.

The corruptions of ancient Acts are ordinarily in the way of exaggeration. As every magistrate becomes the chief magistrate or prefect, so it was only natural that Urbanus a bishop should become Urbanus the Pope; and since these Acts were written whilst yet the bodies, both of the Pope and the Virgin Martyr, lay each in their original tomb, and could be seen in immediate proximity to one another, the connection between them must have seemed obvious and certain, and the copyist who transcribed or compiled the Acts had only to use the license, common to all historians, of assigning the motives or causes of effects which he had to record. St. Cecilia and St. Urban were buried in adjoining chambers, and a bishop of the name of Urban had been a friend of hers during life; therefore they were one and the same Urban, and the Pope had given this honourable place of burial to the Saint because of his affection for her, and admiration of her distinguished merit.

And other exaggerations.

So argued the scribe of the fifth or sixth century, conscientiously doing his best to chronicle the glories of the Church, and to repair the injuries which she had suffered from the wholesale destruction of her ancient records; whereas we of the nineteenth century, though removed to a greater distance from the time of action, yet having a larger field of observation, and exercising a sound criticism upon the multitude of contradictory notices that have come down to us, venture to propose another mode of reconstructing the history.

[1] There is evidence of there having been a small *pagus* near the Cemetery of Prætextatus, which once had its own bishop, and where a martyr named Urban was held in veneration. This is pointed out by Father Lesley, S.J., Missale Mozarab., t. ii. p. 608; St. Cyp., Ep. 31, 38.

We believe that St. Cecilia was buried here, because the cemetery was her own property; that her whole family, or at least several important branches of it, embraced the Christian faith before the close of the second century (so numerous are the Christian epitaphs of that period belonging to them), and that they then transferred this cemetery, and a considerable portion of the adjacent ground, for the general use of the Church, to Pope Zephyrinus, who forthwith appointed his deacon, Callixtus, to take charge of it, and it became in time the most extensive and important of all the subterranean cemeteries; that St. Cecilia's vault was originally a very small and dark chamber,[1] but that Damasus opened a new entrance into it by the staircase and vestibule which now exist, and enlarged the chamber at considerable labour and expense, as the large brick arches and walls abundantly prove; and that this was done for the better accommodation of the many pilgrims who flocked to visit it. Finally, we believe that at a somewhat later period—probably in the pontificate of Sixtus III.—the *luminare* was opened over it, and those figures of Polycamus, Sabastianus, and Cyrinus painted upon its sides.

The saints on the *luminare* accounted for.

We know of no other Sebastian that can be meant here but the famous martyr whose Basilica is not far off. Cyrinus or Quirinus was a martyr and Bishop of Siscia in Illyria, who, in the days of Prudentius,[2] lay in his own city, but when Illyria was invaded by the barbarians, his body was brought to Rome and buried in the Basilica of St. Sebastian about the year 420. Of Polycamus the history is altogether lost; neither the Martyrologies nor ecclesiastical historians have left us any record of his life. Only this we know, on the authority of the Itinerary preserved to us by William of Malmesbury, that among those

R.S., i. 118–122.

[1] De Rossi suggests, as a solution of the difficulties which his brother's architectural analysis throws in the way of this modification of St. Cecilia's history, that her body may have originally rested in a sarcophagus placed in the Papal Crypt, whence St. Callixtus may have removed it when he set apart that crypt for the burial of the Popes and other bishops.

[2] Peristeph. vii.

who then lay "near the Church of the Martyr Cecilia" in this cemetery, there were some whose names and acts are not familiar to us from the Roman Martyrologies. Stephen and Sixtus, Zephyrinus and Eusebius, Melchiades and other Popes are mentioned; but also Policamus and Optatus. The same two appear also among those whose relics were translated from this cemetery in the ninth century to the churches of Sta. Prassede and San. Silvestro in Capite, within the city of Rome. De Rossi identifies this Optatus with a Bishop of Vesceter, in Mauritania Sitifensis, who was a correspondent of St. Augustine's[1] about A.D. 420. The name of Vesceter occurs only once in Ecclesiastical Annals—viz., in a conference between the Catholics and the Donatists, A.D. 411; when the name of the Donatist Bishop was Fortunatus, and of the Catholic, Optatus. We know that the Vandals from Spain entered Mauritania in 428, and tortured and killed many Christian bishops. Optatus may have been one of those who suffered at this time, and his relics may have been translated to Rome, as those of Quirinus were, under similar circumstances, from Illyria; and we may conjecture that the body of St. Policamus also was brought from the same place about the same time, and they may have been buried together in the Crypt of St. Eusebius. Certain fragments have been found in that crypt of a monument to the memory of a Bishop of Vesceter, who had died in Africa, *Episcopus Ves . . . itanus, Rec . . . Numidiæ;* and if we may be allowed thus to couple facts with conjectures in order to supply the want of more authentic records, we seem in this way to have provided a sufficient explanation why the figures of the martyrs Policamus and Quirinus should have been painted in the interior of this *luminare.* Their names were just now on the lips of the faithful, because their relics had been so lately deposited in this neighbourhood at the time when the *luminare* was made.

R.S., ii. 221–226.

[1] Ep. 190.

CHAPTER V.

THE EPITAPHS OF ST. EUSEBIUS AND OF SEVERUS.

Crypt of Eusebius—An epistograph copy of a Damasine inscription in honour of Pope Eusebius made in the sixth or seventh century—Faults of the copy corrected—Historical importance of the inscription—Graffiti of the Martyrs Parthenius and Calocerus—Inscription by the Deacon Severus.

Crypt of St. Eusebius.

Plan, VI. 9. I. L.

THE Itineraries, after mentioning St. Cecilia and the Popes, and "the innumerable multitude of martyrs" that rest near them, go on to say that Eusebius, Pope and martyr, rests in a cave some way off; and St. Cornelius, Pope and martyr, in another cave still farther off. That we may complete our review of the historical monuments of the Cemetery of St. Callixtus, it is necessary that we should visit both of these *caves* or subterranean chambers; and we will take that of St. Eusebius first, as being the nearest. It lies, in fact, just where our guides would have led us to expect, viz., between St. Cornelius and the other Popes; not much more than a hundred paces from the latter; yet still in a different area from that in which they lay, and to which alone originally belonged the name of *Cœmeterium Callixti.*

Fragments found of a Damasine inscription.

It was in 1852 that De Rossi, after having recovered the tomb of St. Cornelius, and whilst still searching for the crypt of the Popes, came upon half a dozen bits of marble in the second floor of the Catacomb, with letters in a character somewhat like the Damasine in form, yet very inferior in execution. The only perfect words were SCINDITUR and SEDITIO, and the fragments were EUS, EXEMPL, and TEG. Immediately he

remembered the inscription about a certain Eusebius, which, having been found in old MSS. without any indication of the place whence it had been copied, had furnished a subject of much discussion to Baronius, Tillemont, and others, as to its sense and authorship. Some, like Tillemont and the Bollandists, had almost taken it for granted that the Eusebius spoken of had been the Pope of that name, and had attributed the verses, therefore, to Pope Damasus; whilst others, with Baronius, thought it incredible that the "Liber Pontificalis" and other sources of ecclesiastical history should have been so absolutely silent about incidents of such magnitude to the Church of Rome as are here recorded, and chose rather to refer them to some priest or bishop holding a less exalted position.

We need not say towards which side leaned the opinion of De Rossi, after finding these fragments just where he had reason to believe Pope Eusebius had been buried; and he took the earliest opportunity of publishing the discovery in a lecture before one of the learned societies in Rome. He had yet to wait nearly five years before the work of excavation enabled him to penetrate fully into the interior of the cemetery at this place, and to set the question finally at rest. The labours of the Commission of Sacred Archæology had been employed during the interval in disinterring those chapels of the Popes and St. Cecilia which have been just described. But in 1856 they returned to this spot, and as they removed the soil which here, as elsewhere throughout all the crypts of historical interest, had been poured in for centuries through an open *luminare*, De Rossi discovered forty other fragments of the same inscription.

Importance of this crypt.

When the excavation was completed, it was easy to see the importance which had once attached to the chapels that were now recovered. Not only was there a staircase descending to them from the upper air, but walls had been built in the subterranean itself, to prevent those who entered it from going astray, and losing themselves in the labyrinth of surrounding

Plan, VI. 1.

Plan, VI. 9, 10. galleries. They were guided of necessity to two chapels, opposite to one another, on different sides of the path. One was about 9 feet by 12, the other considerably larger, 16 by 13. The one had evidently contained the object of devotion; the other was added for the convenience of the worshippers. The Plan, VI. 9. one which was the smaller in size, but the more sacred in character, had an *arcosolium* on each side as well as at the end, that opposite the door being the most important of the three. At the back of it was another smaller *arcosolium*, and in the *lunette* of this later addition we can see the impress of a marble tablet that was once placed here vertically, not horizontally, according to the more usual practice of the Catacombs. Clearly, this must have been the tomb of some distinguished Christian deemed worthy of being buried so close to the martyr whose tomb had occupied the principal place in the crypt; and De Rossi suggests that here, probably, was the inscription we spoke of at the end of the last chapter, the epitaph of the Bishop of Vesceter. The chapel had once been highly decorated, but not according to the more ancient fashion of painting Scriptural subjects on the wall. The vault was divided into hexagonal and polygonal compartments, in very brilliant colours, filled with birds and flowers alternately; the *arcosolia* had been covered with mosaics, and the walls lined with precious marbles. All is now sadly ruined, but it is still possible to distinguish among the remains of the mosaic work in the arch of the larger *arcosolium* traces of one of the most common Christian symbols, a double-handled vessel, with a bird on either side of it; also certain winged figures which probably represented the several seasons, and a few other accessories of ornament; but the main figures and general design have perished. The walls of Plan, VI. 10. the opposite chamber were never cased with marble, so that the pilgrims were able to leave here the same tokens of their presence as they left at St. Sixtus. The *graffiti* are of the same general character, only of a somewhat later date; the names are more modern, *Laurentius*, *Tobias*, *Leo*, *Adolphus*,

Deusdedit, &c.; the old forms of prayer have disappeared, and in their stead we read, ΚΥΡΙΕ, ΒΟΗΘΗ ΤΟΥ ΔΟΥΛΟΥ ΣΟΥ ΒΕΝΙΑΜΙΝ, *Lord, help Thy servant Benjamin*, &c.; the inscriptions are mostly in Latin, and among the few that are Greek there are symptoms of Byzantine peculiarities. On the whole, we may say with confidence, that they belong to the fifth century rather than to the third, or they may perhaps have been written in the days of Damasus.

Inscription to St. Eusebius, a restoration of the sixth or seventh century.

The chief object of interest, however, in these chambers at present is the inscription which occupies the middle of the smaller room. Of course, this was not its original position; but it has been so placed in order that we may see both sides of the stone without difficulty. On the one side is an imperial inscription in honour of Caracalla, belonging to the year 214; on the other a Damasine, in honour of Eusebius.[1] We call it Damasine, because it had been published in the later editions of his works, even before its discovery in this place; and also because it lays claim to that title itself. But everybody can see at a glance that it was never executed by the same hand to which we are indebted for so many other beautiful productions of that Pope. Whilst De Rossi had only recovered three or four fragments, he was disposed to think that it might have been one of the earliest efforts of the artist who subsequently attained such perfection; but as the number of specimens increased, he became more and more convinced that it was a copy made in a later age—a *restoration*, as we should now say, and partaking of the characteristics of many other modern restorations, which are not improvements. In his lecture to the Roman antiquaries in the summer of 1856, he proclaimed his firm persuasion that the stone, which he was then partially recovering, was not the original on which the epitaph of St. Damasus had been first

[1] From the fourth century downwards, instances of appropriation by Christians of Pagan monuments are not rare. *Bullett.*, 1863, p. 84, and see Plate VI.

engraved; but that it had been set up by Pope Symmachus, or Vigilius, or John III. (A.D. 498–574), of all of whom we know that they did their best to repair the damage which had been done in the Catacombs by the Lombards and others. We have already quoted[1] an inscription of Pope Vigilius, in which he expressly mentions that some of the marble tablets on which certain *tituli* were engraved had been broken, and that he had done his best to restore the whole work; and De Rossi thought it very probable that this might be one of his restorations. He had also, on another occasion, publicly hazarded a conjecture that the artist who had engraved all the Damasine inscriptions was Furius Dionysius Filocalus, the same who, in the time of Liberius, the immediate predecessor of Damasus, had illustrated the Civil and Ecclesiastical Calendar, of which we have spoken elsewhere as being one of our most valuable ancient Christian documents.[2] In course of time, both these conjectures of De Rossi have been established by most incontrovertible evidence. When all the fragments that could be found were put together, there appeared at the top and bottom of the tablet the following title—

DAMASUS EPISCOPUS FECIT EUSEBIO EPISCOPO ET MARTYRI.

"Damasus, Bishop, set up this to Eusebius, Bishop and Martyr."

And on either side of the verses, a single file of letters reveals to us

FURIUS DIONYSIUS FILOCALUS SCRIBSIT DAMASIS[3] PAPPÆ CULTOR ATQUE AMATOT.

"Furius Dionysius Filocalus, a worshipper[4] and lover of Pope Damasus, wrote this."

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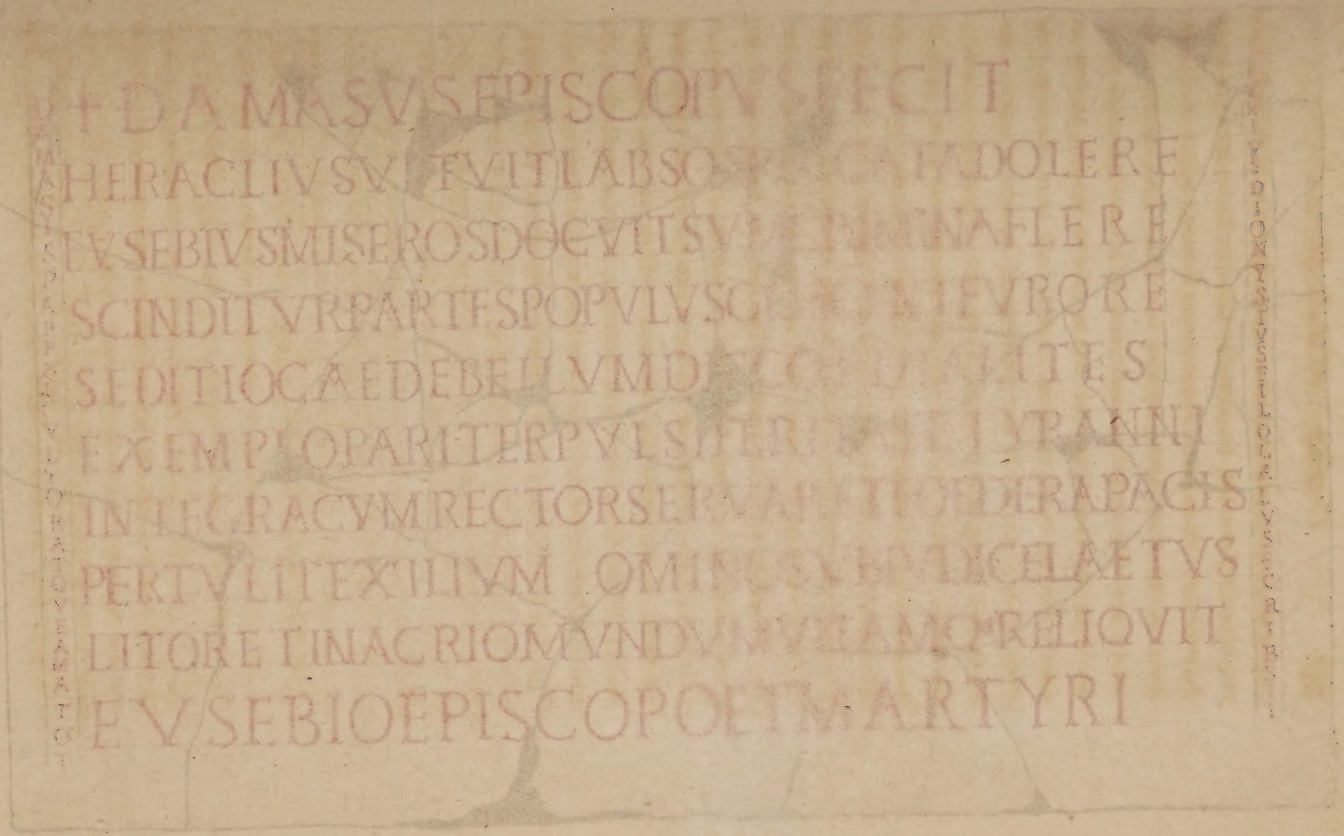
[1] See page 174. [2] See page 19.

[3] De Rossi at first proposed to read *Damasi* SUI *Papæ;* and referred in confirmation to the inscription of Severus (Plate IX. 3). But other fragments of the original have since been found, which show that the letter S at the end of *Damasi* was an interpolation by the copyist. It is now clear that *Papæ* alone was a recognised episcopal title in the days of Damasus. See "Epitaphs of the Catacombs," p. 115.

[4] Used here, of course, in the old sense of worship, *i.e.*, honour. The


DAMASVS EPISCOPVS FECIT
HERACLIVS VI FVIT LABSO
EVSEBIVS MISEROS DOCVIT SV
SCINDITVR PARTES POPVLVS
SEDITIO CAEDES BELLVM
EXEMPLO PARITER PVLS
INTEGRA CVM RECTOR SERVA
PERTVLIT EXILIVM
LITORE TINACRIO MVNDV
EVSEBIO EPISCOPO ET MARTYRI

DAMASVSEPISCOPVSFECIT

HERACLIVSVITVITIABSOSPECCATADOLERE

EVSEBIVSMISEROSDOCVITSVACRIMINAFLERE

SCINDITVRINPARESPOPVLVSGLISCENEFVRORE

SEDITIOCAEDESBELLVMDISCORDIALITES

EXTEMPLOPARITERPVLSIFERITATETYRANNI

INTEGRACVMRECTORSERVARETFOEDERAPACIS

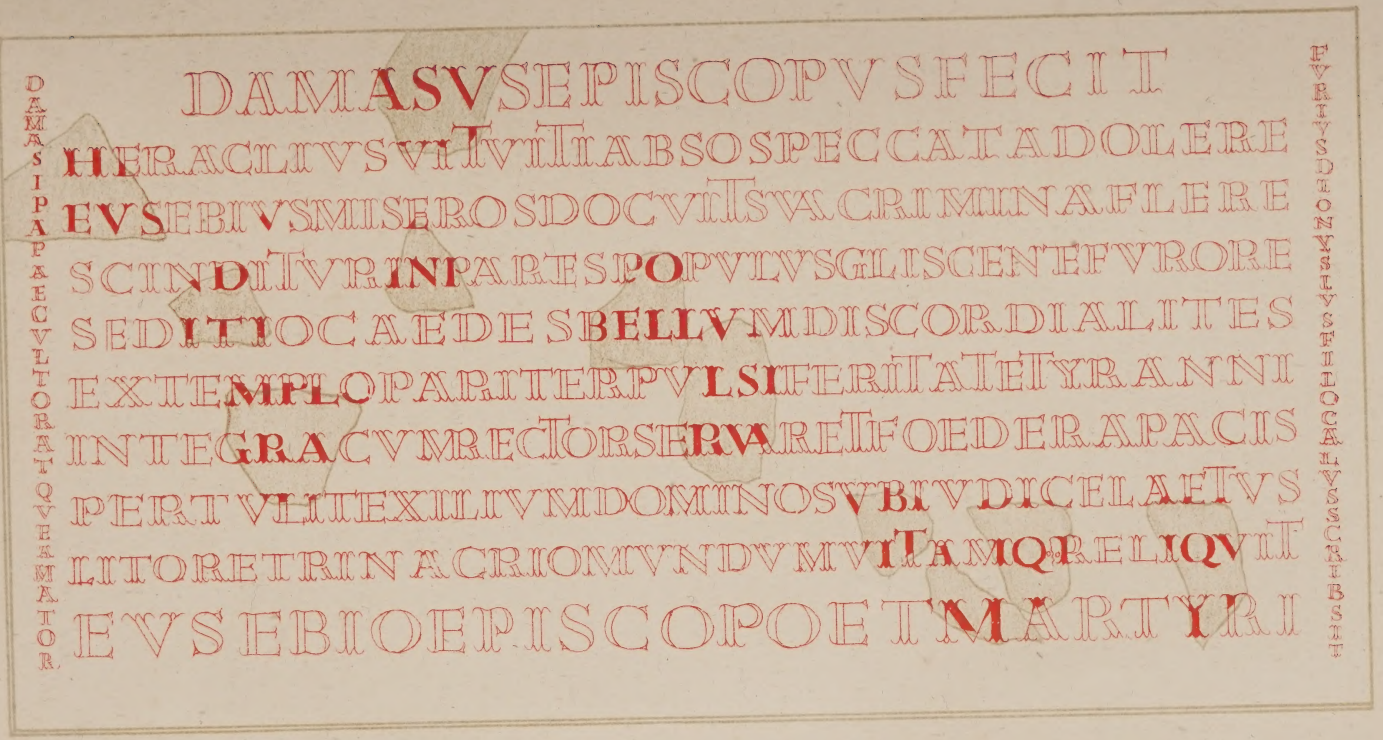
PERTVLITEXILIVMDOMINOSVBIVDICELAETVS

LITORETRINACRIOMVNDVMVITAMQRELIQVIT

EVSEBIOEPISCOPOETMARTYRI

DAMASIPAPAECVLTORATQVEAMATOR

FVRIVSDIONVSIVSFILOCALVSSCRIBSIT



The inscription itself ran thus :—

"Heraclius forbad the lapsed to grieve for their sins. Eusebius taught those unhappy ones to weep for their crimes. The people were rent into parties, and with increasing fury began sedition, slaughter, fighting, discord, and strife. Straightway both [the Pope and the heretic] were banished by the cruelty of the tyrant, although the Pope was preserving the bonds of peace inviolate. He bore his exile with joy, looking to the Lord as his Judge, and on the shore of Sicily gave up the world and his life."

Fragments of the original still to be seen.

Moreover, a diligent search among the minute fragments of stone and marble lying amid the rubbish of the chamber brought to light several bits of the original Damasine inscription, executed with the same faultlessness as all the other specimens of its class; and amongst these bits were one or two which had escaped the search of the man who attempted to reproduce a copy of the whole in the sixth or seventh century; as, for instance, the word IN, which the copyist entirely omitted from the third line. He seems to have been an ignorant man, only able to transcribe the letters which were before him, and even leaving, occasionally, a vacant space where he was conscious that a letter was wanting, which, however, he could not supply.

Former editions of this inscription.

Our readers have an opportunity of comparing the original inscription with its restoration;[1] and although the task of correcting the errors and supplying the omissions of the copyist may now seem very easy to any scholar, we must remember that it was much more difficult for those who saw it only on the stone itself, where there is no separation of the

following inscription from Fabretti (p. 165) shows that a slave or freedman, devoted to his master's service and mindful of his interests, was called *cultor Domini*:—

De cujus famâ multi cum laude loquuntur,
Quod fuerit cultor Domini rerumque et amator.

Petronius (Sat. 127) uses the word *cultores* of adorers of ladies. St. Jerome, in his letter to Eustochium on the death of St. Paula, breaks forth into the following acclamation—"Vale, O Paula, et cultoris hic ultimam senectutem orationibus juva."

[1] Plates VI. VII.

letters of one word from those of another. It is curious, therefore, to observe in the MSS. which have come down to us (the writers of which never saw the original stone), the fresh blunders introduced by the ineffectual attempts at correction made in earlier ages. The substitution of *sua* for *sum* in the second line, and the insertion of *in* in the third, were too obvious to be overlooked; but *seditiocaede* of the fourth line was dissolved into *sed et loca ede* in the MS. first adopted by Gruter; *litore Trinacrio* became *litor et nacrio*, whilst the word *omino* in the penultimate is changed, in one MS., into *homine*, and into *omnino* in another.

Importance of this inscription.

It is not without reason that De Rossi rejoices in the recovery of this stone as one of the happiest fruits of his labours in this cemetery. It is, in fact, the recovery of a lost chapter in the history of the Church. The scholars of Alcuin's days, who had transcribed it, omitted its title or dedication; nor did they give any information as to where they had seen it. Baronius, therefore, as we have said, refused to accept it as belonging to Pope Eusebius. He could not believe that the memory of so important an incident in the history of the Roman Church, and the life of one of its chief pastors, could have so entirely perished as never to have come to the knowledge of Eusebius the historian, for example, nor have left a trace behind it in any other contemporary records. Now, however, that the identity of the person spoken of is put beyond question, we are able to see how admirably it fits into the circumstances of the times it belongs to; and our readers will be interested in studying this page of ancient history just rescued from the devouring jaws of time.

Its interpretation.

Every student is familiar with one phase, at least, of the disputes of the second and third centuries as to the proper discipline to be observed towards those unhappy Christians—*miseri* is the title by which they are always described by contemporary writers—who had denied the faith and relapsed into the outward profession of paganism, under the pressure of

persecution. The schism of Novatian has impressed upon us the existence in those days of a hard, proud, self-satisfied temper in many members of the Christian flock, like that of the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son, which would fain close the door of reconciliation against these miserable apostates. It has brought out in bold relief to this hateful severity the tender and merciful conduct of our true mother the Church, ever ready to follow the teaching and example of her Divine Head, to pour oil and wine into the wounds of bleeding souls, and to welcome the penitent returning to his home. "That is the Church," writes St. Pacian, "where tears are not refused to the miserable, where the sick are healed, where insolent soundness and haughty righteousness claim no place."[1]

Mercy of the Church towards apostates,

But we had not been so conscious, perhaps, of another difficulty which the Church had to encounter, about this same time, on the other side. We had not watched so keenly her prudent firmness in imposing conditions upon her grant of forgiveness, and exacting wholesome penance from those who desired to obtain it. Nevertheless, there is not wanting in contemporary records very distinct testimony to her exercise of a Divinely-inspired wisdom in this particular; and the pontificates both of Eusebius and of his predecessor, Marcellus, illustrate in a most striking way this part of her character.

tempered by severity.

The letters of the Roman clergy to St. Cyprian,[2] written at a time when the See of Peter was vacant after the martyrdom of St. Fabian, speak quite clearly as to the tradition and practice of the Church. They show us the *lapsi*, armed with letters of recommendation, which they had obtained from martyrs or confessors of the faith, pressing for immediate reconciliation; and the priests and deacons, whilst granting absolution at once if there was danger of death, or if the appointed time of penance had expired, yet insisting in all

[1] Ad Sempron., Ep. iii. 5.

[2] Ep. inter Cyprianicas, 31.

other cases upon a middle course, between too great severity and sternness on the one hand, and too easy an acquiescence with their demand on the other (*pronam nostram facilitatem . . . nostram quasi duram crudelitatem*). They say that the remedy must not be less than the wound, and that if the remedy be applied too hastily, a new and more fatal wound will be created: "Let the groans of the penitents be heard, not once only, but again and again; let them shed abundant tears, that so those eyes, which have wickedly looked upon idols, may blot out before God, by sufficient tears, the unlawful deeds they have committed:" and they repeat maxims of this kind again and again. St. Cyprian, too, in his own letters,[1] speaks of riots and disturbances having been caused in some towns of Africa by the overweening presumption and violence of apostates, who would fain extort from the rulers of the Church an immediate restoration to her peace and communion: they had even succeeded in gaining possession of some of the ecclesiastical buildings.

Consequent disturbances

After this date, we do not read of any more disturbances arising from this cause until the persecution of Diocletian, when similar results followed from similar circumstances. This persecution, like that of Decius, had been preceded by a long term of peace, during which men's minds had somewhat relaxed from their primitive strength and fervour. Many, therefore, fell away; but when the persecution ceased, they would fain return. Marcellus was firm in upholding the Church's discipline.[2] He was resisted with violence, especially by one who, least of all, had any right to plead for a mitigation of it, as he had denied the faith even in time of peace. Angry passions were roused, and the public tranquillity was disturbed by the violence of the contending factions, to such an extent that Maxentius, who had no love for Christianity, and whose edict of toleration was dictated by the merest political motives, determined on sending the Pope

under Marcellus

[1] Ep. 22, § 3.

[2] Lib. Pontif., in Marcello, § ii.

into exile. This history is contained in the epitaph with which St. Damasus adorned his tomb—

VERIDICUS RECTOR, LAPSOS QUIA CRIMINA FLERE
PRÆDIXIT, MISERIS FUIT OMNIBUS HOSTIS AMARUS.
HINC FUROR, HINC ODIUM SEQUITUR, DISCORDIA, LITES,
SEDITIO, CÆDES, SOLVUNTUR FŒDERA PACIS.
CRIMEN OB ALTERIUS CHRISTUM QUI *IN PACE* NEGAVIT,
FINIBUS EXPULSUS PATRIÆ EST FERITATE *TYRANNI.*
HÆC BREVITER DAMASUS VOLUIT COMPERTA REFERRE,
MARCELLI UT POPULUS MERITUM COGNOSCERE POSSET.

"The truth-speaking Pope,[1] because he preached that the lapsed should weep for their crimes, was bitterly hated by all those unhappy ones. Hence followed fury, hatred, discord, contentions, sedition, and slaughter, and the bonds of peace were ruptured. On the charge of another, who in [a time of] peace had denied Christ, [the Pontiff] was expelled the shores of his country by the cruelty of the tyrant [Maxentius]. These things Damasus having learnt, was desirous to relate briefly, that people might recognise the merit of Marcellus."

If we compare this epitaph on Marcellus with the recently-discovered one on Eusebius, it is easy to recognise a continuation of the same history. Perhaps the Heraclius named in the later inscription as the leader of the heretical faction was the very man whose apostasy during a time of peace is commemorated in the former. Anyhow, the nature of the strife in which Eusebius was engaged is clear; and we learn with surprise that a strife of this kind was capable, even at that time, of attracting the attention and drawing down one of the heaviest punishments of the civil power, not out of any professed hatred of the Christian name, but merely in the interests of public peace. and Eusebius.

These two Pontiffs, Marcellus and Eusebius, have justly been claimed as among the first who suffered persecution in defence of the liberties of the Church. For here there was no question of offering incense to idols or of denying any

[1] *Rector* is the word habitually used by St. Damasus when speaking of the Bishop of Rome. See "Epitaphs of the Catacombs," p. 116.

dogma of the faith; they were driven from their see and died in exile, not because they refused to apostatise, but because they insisted on maintaining the integrity of ecclesiastical discipline, and governing the Church according to the Church's rules. They may justly, therefore, be reckoned among the earliest of that noble army of martyrs who, from those days even to our own, have braved every suffering rather than receive an interpretation of the conditions of Church membership from the hands of the Civil Government.

Inscription to Saints Parthenius and Calocerus. VI. 13, 14.

As we leave the *cubiculum* of St. Eusebius, we observe how the ruined walls around us must once have shut off every gallery from the visiting of pilgrims, save only that to the left, where we soon come upon another double chamber, half being on either side of the gallery. At the entrance of one of these, a poor unornamented chamber, without even an *arcosolium*, is a *graffito* of insignificant appearance, yet really of considerable historical importance. The words are these—*Tertio Idus Fefrua Parteni Martiri Caloceri Martiri.* The reader who remembers the testimony of our ancient pilgrims will not need to be told that he has here a probable, if not a certain, indication of the burial-place of the two celebrated martyrs Parthenius and Calocerus,[1] who are coupled by them with St. Eusebius. If he knows anything, however, of the old Church calendars, he may wonder at the date assigned, since the *Passio* of these martyrs was always celebrated on the 19th of May. The inscription which records the translation of their relics to San Silvestro in Capite, in the eighth century, names the same date as is here written in the Catacombs, the 11th of February, for their *natale.* So does the Martyrology of Bede, and others also yet earlier. This date, then, did not mark the day of their martyrdom, for the calendars gave another; nor yet of the translation of their relics from the Catacombs to the Roman churches, for it belonged to them before that translation was made. Can the Bollandists be right in conjecturing

[1] See page 266.

dogma of the faith; they were driven from their see and died in exile, not because they refused to apostatise, but because they insisted on maintaining the integrity of ecclesiastical discipline and governing the Church according to the Church's rules. They may justly, therefore, be reckoned among the countless host of that noble army of martyrs who, from those days even to our own, have braved every suffering rather than receive an interpretation of the conditions of Church membership from the hands of the Civil Government.

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[1] See page 266.

that it refers to some earlier translation of their relics from one place to another, within the Catacombs themselves, for purposes of greater security under some special danger?[1] A comparison of the statements by various ancient authors seems to require it. Recent discoveries in the Catacombs give it considerable countenance, and De Rossi does not hesitate to adopt it. He places their martyrdom in the middle of the third century, and their first place of burial in that chamber on a higher level, of which we have already spoken as being ornamented with a remarkable painting, which seems to represent two men on their trial before the tribunal of the Emperor.[2] They were probably these very martyrs. He also believes the first translation of their relics to have been made in the earliest years of the fourth century, when all the *loca ecclesiastica* were confiscated by the persecution of Diocletian. The evidence in support of this theory is certainly very strong, but its details are too minute for insertion in this place. We can only make room for one which does not require many words of explanation. A reconciliation is at once effected between the two very different dates assigned to these martyrs, both given with equal minuteness, yet separated from one another by more than half a century. Their Acts say that they suffered *Decio Augusto et Grato consulibus;* the Filocalian Almanac merely records after their names *Diocletiano VIII. et Maximiano VIII. cons.* The first was probably the date of their martyrdom, A.D. 250; the second of this translation of their relics, A.D. 303.

Leaving this chamber behind us, and advancing a few paces farther along the same gallery, we overstep the boundaries of the area containing the Crypt of St. Eusebius, and enter upon the Cemetery of St. Soteris, as it is called. The keen obser- Area VII.

[1] This conjecture is not found in the Acta of the Bollandists; but Sollier gives it on the authority of Papebroch in his notes on Usuard's Martyrology.

[2] See Plate VIII.

Characteristics of different *areæ* outside of the old Cemetery of Callixtus.

vation and indefatigable patience of De Rossi and his brother have enabled them to distinguish in this cemetery four several parts, marked in our map as VII., VIII., IX. and X., or, to name them in what seems to have been their real chronological order, VII., IX., X., VIII. All these differ from other parts of the cemetery in this, that not a single chamber can be found in any one of them which is decorated throughout in all its parts, as chambers are in the Crypts of Lucina, and in the series of vaults near the Papal Crypt, for example. *Arcosolia* are found in great abundance, and some of them are painted; but even the decoration of these becomes more and more rare as we descend in the scale of chronology. In the most ancient *area*, there are six or seven painted *arcosolia;* in the second, two; in the third, one; and in the last, none at all. In the first *area*, mosaics were sometimes used for decoration; occasionally, also, variegated work in small slabs of marble, which in later *areæ* was imitated in painting. This *area* contains also several instances of treble, and even quadruple, chambers, connected with one another either wholly or partially; *i.e.*, either by direct communication on the ground-floor, or indirectly by means of transverse or oblique cuttings into the shaft of a common *luminare*. On both sides of the central gallery of the second *area*, which seems to belong to the age of Constantine, *arcosolia* and entrances to *cubicula* alternate with one another in exact regularity; and both the multiplication and the regular distribution of monuments of this kind is a step in the development of architectural forms, which is not to be found elsewhere in the Roman Catacombs. The third *area* is characterised by a still more remarkable development of subterranean architecture; the chambers are no longer square or oblong, but circular, hexagonal, polygonal, and altogether bearing a close resemblance to the mausoleums which were being built above ground of St. Helen, Sta. Costanza, &c. The last *area* is only begun; and though its limits are accurately defined by long straight galleries, the space which they

enclose is very imperfectly excavated; much of it still remains unbroken rock; and even of the galleries and chambers which have been made, several portions have never been used.

Identified as the Cemetery of St. Soteris.

These *areæ* De Rossi has identified as the Cemetery of St. Soteris, a virgin martyr whose feast appears in the old Martyrologies on the 10th or 11th of February, and who is said to have suffered under Diocletian in the year 304, and to have been buried "in her own cemetery." The old Itineraries quoted in the beginning of this Book[1] spoke of "the Church of St. Soteris, martyr, where she lies with many other martyrs;" and we know from analogy that this church must have stood over the cemetery in which she was originally buried. A careful combination of the various topographical hints which they have given puts it beyond a doubt that this church is to be looked for somewhere between the *cella* of St. Sixtus, St. Cecilia, and the Via Ardeatina. And precisely in this situation we find the remains of a small Basilica, just like that of St. Sixtus already described; and immediately behind it traces of a staircase which once descended into this part of the Catacomb.

Plan, VIII. Y.

Her relationship to St. Ambrose.

We learn a good deal about St. Soteris from St. Ambrose. He has not, indeed, recorded the circumstances of her martyrdom, but he has spoken of her more than once, in consequence of her near relationship to one of his own ancestors. When his sister Marcellina determined to lead a life of perpetual virginity, he attributed the suggestion of this holy purpose to the example of St. Soteris, which he calls *domesticum piæ parentis exemplum.* He also bears witness incidentally to her youth, her beauty, her noble blood, and her still more noble confession of the Christian faith[2] under insults and tortures, and finally unto martyrdom itself. Marcellina, with her brothers, Satyrus and St. Ambrose, were all buried in Milan, near the tombs of the holy martyrs SS. Gervasius and Protasius; but

[1] See page 266.

[2] De Exhort. Virg., c. 12; De Virginibus, iii. 6.

we learn from the epitaph on her tomb that the hereditary sepulchre of the family was in Rome ;[1] and it seems very probable that it was this very cemetery of which we are now speaking. Nothing, indeed, has been found within the Basilica itself to justify this conjecture ; but from the graves around and below it inscriptions have been recovered which record the burials of an Aurelius Satyrus, Aurelius Titianus, Marcellus, Marcella, and Marcellina ; all of them names intimately connected with the family of St. Ambrose.[2]

Of the tomb of St. Soteris herself we can find no memorial whatever ; and so far this evidence for the identification of this part of the cemetery is less convincing than that which has been produced for the identification of the Papal Crypt and the tombs of St. Cecilia, St. Cornelius, and St. Eusebius. It can hardly be said, however, that the identification itself is less certain ; for if the *cella* we have spoken of be not that of St. Soteris, it would follow that there was an ancient Christian shrine in this place, which not a single Christian writer had ever mentioned. Probably the virgin martyr was originally buried in a sarcophagus which occupied the principal place in a large crypt very near the foot of the staircase. It is clear that some tomb was once there which was much frequented by pilgrims, for the gallery which leads to it was enlarged to double the ordinary width, thereby destroying a large number of the graves with which the wall had originally been pierced ; and in the crypt itself a niche is excavated close to the place where the sarcophagus would have stood—a niche for the reception of the large flat vessel in which, as we have seen, the perfumed oils were ordinarily burnt near the tombs of the martyrs. The body of St. Soteris was subsequently translated to the church above ground, in which the writers of the Itineraries of the seventh and eighth centuries tell us that they

Translation of her relics.

[1] Gruter, Inscript., 1055, 6.

[2] That the Bishop's name was Aurelius Ambrosius, De Rossi has shown in the *Bullettino*, 1864, 76, and 1865, 15.

visited it. It was still there when Pope Stephen II. renewed the roof of the Basilica in the latter half of the eighth century, A.D. 752–757; but it was probably removed to the Church of S. Martino ai Monti within the city by Pope Sergius II. about the middle of the next century, A.D. 844–846; for we find her name amongst many others whose relics were in that church not long afterwards.

We have said that the martyrdom of St. Soteris is attributed to the year 304, and that the cemetery is then spoken of as "her own." It must have been begun a little before this time; probably towards the end of the third century, during an interval when the Church was in the enjoyment of such peace that, according to the testimony of Eusebius,[1] the Christians dared to enlarge their Basilicas, or to build new ones in every city. There is nothing strange, then, in their having begun, at the same time, a cemetery of unusual grandeur of dimensions, with so many and such large *luminaria*, that Bosio tells us he was able to traverse its galleries for a considerable distance without the aid of candles; and not knowing its history, he gave it a name derived from this circumstance, calling it *il Cimitero delle buche*, or the cemetery of many mouths. As it was the private property of St. Soteris or her family, perhaps it may have been saved from the general confiscation of the Catacombs which took place in the year before her martyrdom, A.D. 303.

Inscription of the Deacon Severus. VII. 3, 4, 5.

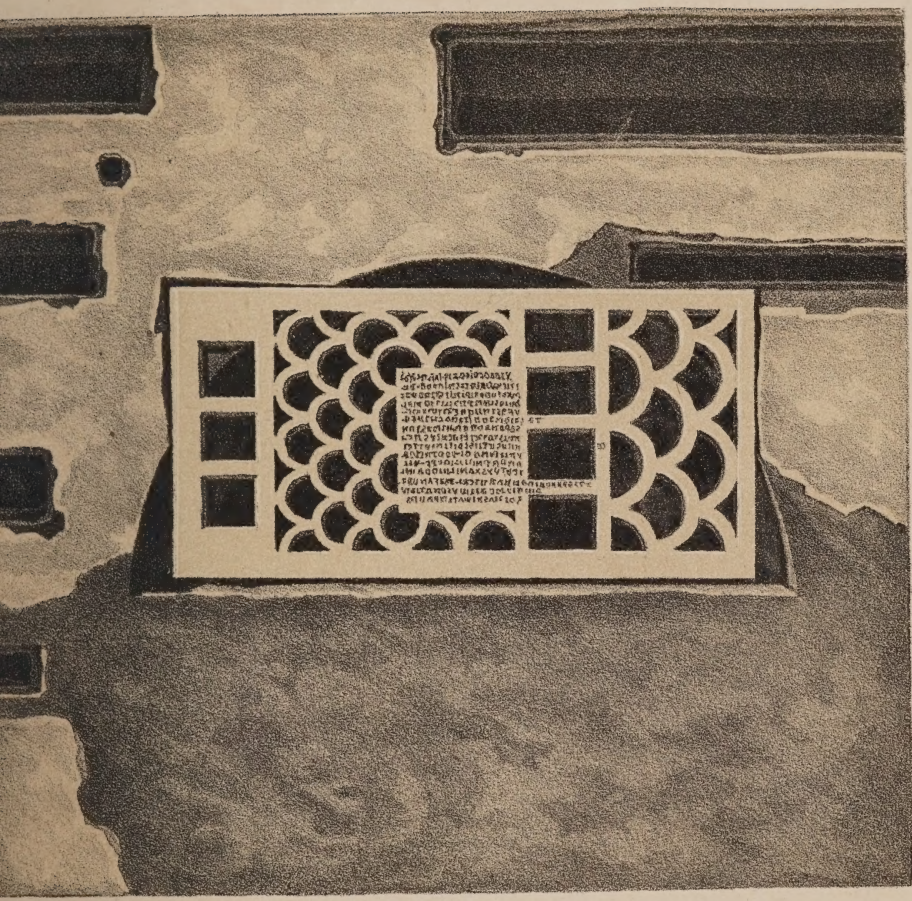
In a chamber opening out of the same gallery in which the Crypt of St. Eusebius is situated is the very remarkable monument of which we have given a representation in Plate IX. It is a large slab, or rather a large door or window of marble, nearly six feet high by three in width, having a plain slab in the centre to receive an inscription, but perforated in all its other parts according to an elaborate pattern, which in its original position would have looked very graceful. Originally it stood upright as part of some Pagan monument, and the few

[1] H. E., viii. 1.

letters of the first inscription which it is still possible to decipher show that some lady had prepared it during her lifetime for the ornamentation of a burial-place for herself and several others. The rest of the Pagan inscription was carefully erased, and the Christian who appropriated it to his own purposes engraved a much longer inscription on the other side, and then, changing its position from vertical to horizontal, used it in a very clumsy way to close the arched recess of an *arcosolium.*

The inscription tells us that this was the work of Severus the Deacon, who received permission from Pope Marcellinus to make a double *cubiculum*, together with an *arcosolium* and *luminare*, for himself and family, as "a quiet resting-place," he says, "in which their bodies might sleep during the long time which was to elapse before they should appear before their Maker and Judge." The only person, however, whose burial is here recorded was "a virgin named Severa, who had died on the 25th of January, at the age of nine years, eleven months, and fifteen days; she had been beloved both by her parents and her servants." The writer then goes on to attribute her creation to the wonderful wisdom and power of God, and to declare his faith in the doctrine of a future resurrection of her body by means of the same power. He praises "the inviolable chastity and modesty of her soul as the work of the Holy Ghost, and expresses his confidence that it will be hereafter restored to the body in a spiritual glory." The phraseology of this composition, as well as its form, are poetical rather than simple; and though not obeying the strict laws of prosody, it is written, according to a common fashion of that period, in verse or quasi-verse, and it runs as follows:—

CUBICULUM DUPLEX CUM ARCISOLIIS ET LU(M)INARE
JUSSU P(A)P(Æ) SUI MARCELLINI DIACONUS ISTE
SEVERUS FECIT MANSIONEM IN PACE QUIETAM
SIBI SUISQUE MEMOR, QUO MEMBRA DULCIA SOMNO
PER LONGUM TEMPUS FACTORI ET JUDICI SERVET.
SEVERA DULCIS PARENTIBUS ET FAMULISQUE



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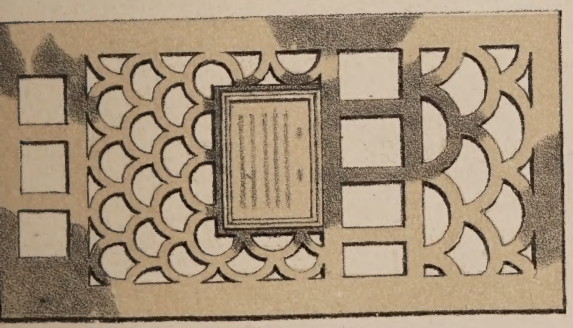

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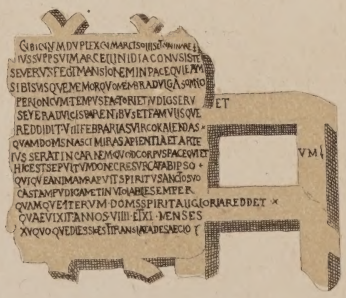

REDDIDIT OCTAVUM FEBRARIAS VIRGO KALENDAS.
QUAM DOM(INU)S NASCI MIRA SAPIENTIA ET ARTE
JUSSERAT IN CARNEM, QUOD CORPUS PACE QUIETUM
HIC EST SEPULTUM DONEC RESURGAT AB IPSO
QUIQUE ANIMAM RAPUIT SPIRITU SANCTO SUO
CASTAM PUDICAM ET INVIOLABILE(M) SEMPER
QUAMQUE ITERUM DOM(INU)S SPIRITALI GLORIA REDDET.
QUÆ VIXIT ANNOS NOVEM ET UNDECI(M) MENSES
QUINDECI(M) QUOQUE DIES SIC EST TRANSLATA DE SŒCLO.

"The Deacon Severus made this double *cubiculum*, with its *arcosolia* and *luminare*, by order [or permission] of his Pope Marcellinus, as a quiet abode in peace for himself and his family, to the end that it may keep their sweet limbs in sleep through a long period of time for their Maker and Judge. Severa, amiable both to her parents and servants, gave up [her soul], a virgin, on the 25th of January. Whom the Lord with wonderful wisdom and skill had ordered to be born into the flesh. Her body is buried here at rest in peace, until it shall rise again by means of Him who took away her soul, [which had been made] chaste, modest, and ever inviolate by His Holy Spirit. She lived nine years, and eleven months, and fifteen days besides. Thus was she translated out of this world."

We shall have occasion to return to this *cubiculum duplex* when we come to speak of Christian Art; and we have already pointed out its importance as illustrating both the chronology and the method of administration of the Catacombs. We must, therefore, now reluctantly take our leave of this part of the cemetery, and go in quest of the only remaining historical monument reported by our guides as belonging to the Via Appia which we have not yet seen—the tomb of St. Cornelius.

CHAPTER VI.

SEPULCHRE OF ST. CORNELIUS.

Labyrinth between Cemetery of St. Callixtus and Crypt of Lucina—Family of Pope Cornelius—His tomb apart from those of the other Popes, and his epitaph in Latin whilst the others are in Greek—Probable reason of this—Two imperfect inscriptions by Damasus restored by De Rossi—Paintings of SS. Cornelius and Cyprian, why found together—Meaning and purpose of the round pillar before his tomb.

Labyrinth connecting the Crypts of St. Lucina with those of St. Callixtus.

"CORNELIUS, Pope and martyr, lies in another cave some way off," says one of our guides of the seventh century; whereas the other, measuring from the same point the tombs of St. Eusebius, St. Calocerus, and St. Parthenius, says, "Not far from thence, in the Cemetery of St. Callixtus, Cornelius and Cyprian sleeps (*sic*) in a church." Measurements of distance are relative, and appear different even to the same person under different circumstances. To anybody returning to the open air, and walking across the vineyard from the tomb of Eusebius to that of Cornelius, the distance will seem very trifling indeed; but we think that most persons who make the transit by means of the subterranean passages are wont to complain of its tedious length and intricacy, especially as there is very little of interest to be studied on the way.

Area XIV.

Our path traverses that vast network of galleries which intervenes between the Cemetery of St. Callixtus and that of St. Lucina. These galleries are of later date than either cemetery. They are generally very narrow, crossing one another in all directions, and impossible to be reduced to any regular plan. They

observe, for the most part, the horizontal level in each of the two stories in which they have been made; but as they come in contact with portions of different *areæ*, their height is very variable. Each *flat* of this labyrinth has its staircase, and the higher system of galleries spreads over the whole Catacomb without any regard to the ancient limits of the different *areæ*. The lower flat is chiefly remarkable for the entire absence of every kind of ornament. No painting or slabs of marble, no *cubiculum*, not even an *arcosolium*, relieves the monotony of its long straight passages, which we may therefore safely conclude belong to an age posterior to the regular construction of both the *hypogæa* which they were made to unite. The union of the different groups of independent cemeteries into one vast necropolis was not effected without difficulty, owing to the very different levels at which their principal galleries had been excavated. The attentive observer who traverses this portion of the labyrinth which lies between the Papal Crypt and the tomb of St. Cornelius will not fail to recognise the point of junction, and will have many opportunities of appreciating the ingenuity with which the *fossors* accomplished their task. He will, not improbably, also be set on thinking whence it came to pass that St. Cornelius should have been buried at so great a distance from the other occupants of the Holy See; and if he happens to know that learned men have long since fancied that they could discover grounds for suspecting some relationship between Cornelius and the *Gens Cornelia*, he will note this separate place of burial as a circumstance seeming to corroborate that suspicion.

Family of St. Cornelius.

At first, perhaps, it may have been suggested by the fact that this is the only Pope, down to the days of St. Sylvester, who bore the name of any noble Roman family, and it is certainly a remarkable fact that this relationship, supposing it to have existed, would have connected him with the owners of the very cemetery in which, by a singular exception, he was

buried; many very ancient epitaphs having been found here of the *Cornelii* as well as of the *Maximi Cæcilii.* Nor can it be considered as altogether an unimportant circumstance that the epitaph of St. Cornelius should have been in Latin, whilst all the *official* epitaphs, so to call them, of those who were buried in the Papal vault were in Greek. It is now an acknowledged fact that the earliest language of the Church was Greek.[1] St. Paul, a Roman citizen, writes in Greek to the Christians of Rome. So does St. James "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad;" and even St. Mark, though he wrote his Gospel in Rome and for the use of the Romans. The Apostolic Fathers, the apologists and historians of the early Church, and her earliest theologians, wrote and spoke Greek. The most ancient chronicles; pontifical letters, even to the Bishops of Gaul; the proceedings of the first seven Councils, all made use of the same language. Nor did Western Christendom lay it aside, even in her ritual and liturgy, as soon as it ceased to be a generally spoken tongue. Even in the seventh century Roman sacramentaries will be found in which the responses are first made in Greek and then repeated in a Latin translation; and to this day this ancient use of the Greek language has left a deep impress on our own in all ecclesiastical terms, such as *hymn*, *psalm*, *liturgy*, *homily*, *catechism*, *cemetery*, *parish*, *diocese*, *baptism*, *eucharist*, *deacon*, *priest*, *bishop*, and *pope.*

His epitaph in Latin, while Greek was the official language of the Church.

R.S., ii. 236, 237.

The reason of this preference of the ancient Church for Greek seems to have been its more extended use;[2] and for the same reason it was used also by the teachers of philosophy. In the days of Cicero and of Seneca, these men spoke or wrote in Latin; but as early as the second century, under the reign of the Antonines, when philosophy was growing less aristocratic and desired to address a more popular audience,

[1] See Le Hir, Études Bibliques, i. 266; Krauser, De Liturg., i. 357.

[2] Cicero pro Archia. 10.

it adopted the Greek language in preference; witness the writings of Epictetus, Fronto, and Marcus Aurelius.[1]

Sepulchre of St. Cornelius.

The Latin inscription, therefore, on the grave of St. Cornelius was certainly a departure from the ordinary practice of that age; quite as much so as the fact of his burial in a place apart from the rest of his order; and both are at once explained if we suppose his funeral to have been conducted by an old patrician family, having its own ancestral place of burial, and still clinging to the use of their own old language in preference to what they were wont to call the new-fashioned Greek. When we come to examine the grave itself, we find this, too, was not of the usual kind, nor was its position such as we should have expected for the grave of a martyr Pope. It was neither one of the common graves with which the galleries or the walls of the *cubicula* are pierced, and which, as we have seen, served for the tombs of most of the other Popes, nor is it precisely an *arcosolium* or altar-tomb of a chapel. Indeed, there is no regular chapel here at all, but only a gallery of unusual width, in a corner of which a large grave has been excavated, of dimensions sufficient to receive three or four bodies, and in shape not unlike the grave of an *arcosolium*, but with the difference that has been pointed out before as a token of greater antiquity, viz., that the space above the grave is rectangular, not circular. There is no trace of any slab having been let into the wall to lie flat on the surface of the grave. It is probable, therefore, that the body of the Pope was buried in a sarcophagus which once occupied this empty space, and that its top served as the *mensa* or altar, an arrangement of which at least three or four other examples can be found. A close examination, both of the architecture and the inscriptions in the neighbourhood of this tomb, will satisfy us that it was made on a lower level than that of the surrounding galleries, and at a somewhat later period. Some of the older tombs are partially blocked up by the

Area I. K.

R.S, i. 235.

[1] See Boissier, La Religion Romaine, t. ii. p. 116.

pilasters which flank the tomb of the Pope, yet these pilasters are of very great antiquity, probably of the same date as the tomb itself. They are covered with the finest stucco, the same as once covered the inner sides also of the excavation in which we suppose the sarcophagus to have been placed; much finer, and much older, therefore, than that which appears above upon the arches made by Damasus to support the *luminare*.

Fragments of inscriptions in Crypt of St. Cornelius.

Both above and below the opening of his tomb are fragments of large slabs of marble, still adhering to the wall, and containing a few letters of what were once important inscriptions. The upper one was unquestionably the work of Damasus. The letters of the lower, though strongly resembling the Damasine type, yet present a few points of difference, sufficient to warrant the conjecture of De Rossi that they were executed by the same hand, designedly introducing slight variations, to mark that it did not belong to the numerous class of monuments set up by the devotion of that Pontiff. Of the upper inscription eight or ten fragments remain, enabling us to read with certainty the latter halves of seven hexameter lines. Of the lower one, which was written in much larger type, two fragments only remain, containing the first letter of the first line, and the first two letters of the last two lines, together with the bottoms of the six last letters of all. Of the second line we have recovered nothing.

Plate X.

Attempt to complete them.

At first sight it might seem madness to attempt the complete restoration of these two inscriptions—certainly of the latter—on the strength of such slender data as these; yet the attempt has been made by De Rossi, and the result is such as to commend itself with very great force to all who have given due consideration to the subject. We must not detain our readers by repeating De Rossi's most interesting account of his many and laborious efforts, which for so long a time proved utterly fruitless, and of the happy inspiration which at length cleared away all his difficulties, and furnished him with a clue deliver-

ing him from the labyrinth in which he was entangled. But we cannot resist the occasion of transcribing the epitaphs as he supposes them to have been originally written. The difference of type will distinguish the conjectured restorations from the parts that are certain, and, in estimating their degree of probability, the reader should bear in mind two things: first, that inscriptions of this kind were engraved with such exquisite mathematical precision that no emendations can be admitted which would materially increase or diminish the number of letters in each line; and, secondly, that Damasus was in the habit of repeating himself very frequently in his epitaphs, and that several of De Rossi's restorations reproduce some of his favourite expressions and forms of speech. Had the following epitaph been found in some ancient MS., we are confident that no critic would have seen reason to question its genuineness :—

ASPICE, DESCENSU EXSTRU*CTO TENEBRISQUE FUGATIS*
CORNELI MONUMENTA VIDES *TUMULUMQUE SACRATUM.*
HOC OPUS ÆGROTI *DAMASI PRÆSTANTIA FECIT,*
ESSET UT ACCESSUS *MELIOR, POPULISQUE PARATUM*
AUXILIUM SANCTI, *ET VALEAS SI FUNDERE PURO*
CORDE PRECES, DAMASUS *MELIOR CONSURGERE POSSET,*
QUEM NON LUCIS AM*OR, TENUIT MAGE CURA LABORIS.*

"Behold! a way down has been constructed, and the darkness dispelled; you see the monuments of Cornelius and his sacred tomb. This work the zeal of Damasus[1] has accomplished, sick as he is, in order that the approach might be better, and the aid of the Saint might be ready for the people; and that, if you will pour forth your prayers from a pure heart, Damasus may rise up in better health, though it has not been love of life, but rather care for work, that has kept him [here below]."

If this reading be correct, it would follow that Damasus made his usual additions of a *luminare* and a more commodious staircase, perhaps, to this tomb of St. Cornelius at a time when he was suffering from severe illness, so that his life was considered in danger; and this has been the hypothesis

[1] Or "his Excellence Damasus." He seems to use it in his epitaphs as simply equivalent to his name.

on which De Rossi has acted in suggesting the following as a probable restoration of the second epitaph, viz. :—

*S*IRICIUS PERFECIT OPUS
CONCLUSIT ET ARCAM
*MAR*MORE CORNELI QUONIAM
PIA MEMBRA RE*TENTAT*.

"Siricius completed the work, and enclosed the shrine with marble, for it contains the sacred remains of Cornelius."

Of course, this restoration is much more purely conjectural than the preceding one; nevertheless, those who know De Rossi best will be the least inclined to pass over slightingly even his very lightest conjecture. He is so modest in making them, and so careful not to over-estimate them when made, whilst yet subsequent discoveries have, in so many instances, confirmed them to the utmost, that we feel almost the same confidence in his hints and guesses at truth as we do in the most positive assurances of some other writers on similar subjects. We venture then to publish this conjectural restoration of a lost epitaph in the same terms in which De Rossi proposes it; he says that, "without daring to affirm its literal truth, there are certainly strong reasons for believing that it reproduces exactly the sense of the original."

Frescoes of St. Cornelius and St. Cyprian.

This same tomb of St. Cornelius will supply us with an example of his power of happy conjecture, confirmed with certainty by subsequent discoveries. He had often publicly expressed his confident expectation of finding at the tomb of St. Cornelius some memorial of his contemporary and correspondent, St. Cyprian. These two saints were martyred on the same day, though in different years; and their feasts were, therefore, always celebrated together, just as they are now, on the 16th of September, all the liturgical prayers for the day belonging equally to both; and the celebration was held at this spot in the Cemetery of St. Callixtus, as the most ancient calendars and missals assure us—*e.g.*, in the Bucherian calen-

dar, so often quoted, we read *xviii. Kal. Oct. Cypriani, Africæ; Romæ celebratur in Callisti;* and in an old codex of the Roman liturgy, on the same day, *Natale SS. Cornelii et Cypriani, viâ Appiâ in Callisti.*[1] Now De Rossi had found in one of his old guides, to which he had been so much indebted, an extraordinary misstatement, viz., that the bodies both of St. Cyprian and St. Cornelius rested in the same cemetery (of St. Callixtus), though even this was told in such a way as almost to betray the truth that the name of St. Cyprian had been added by a later copyist.[2] He was satisfied that this blunder had not been made without a cause, but that the pilgrim or copyist had been led into error by something he had seen at the tomb of St. Cornelius. And here, on the rediscovery of the tomb, the cause stands at once revealed. Immediately on the right-hand side of the grave are two large figures of bishops, painted on the wall in the Byzantine style, Plate XI. with a legend by the side of each, declaring them to be St. Cornelius and St. Cyprian.[3] Of course this had not been the first ornamentation which this wall received. It is still possible to detect traces of more ancient painting, and even of *graffiti* upon it, underlying this later work. When the later work was executed it is hard to determine with certainty. Each of the bishops carries the book of the Gospels in his hands, and is habited in pontifical vestments, even including the *pallium*, which had not yet been confined as a mark of distinction to metropolitans. If we compare it, however, with the other specimen of a *pallium* which we saw at the grave of St. Cecilia on the figure of St. Urban, we shall observe a difference, which is of value as a note of chronology. Here there is but one cross marked upon the *pallium*, and that on the lower extre-

[1] See also S. Leo. M. Op. ed. Ballerini, ii. p. 96.

[2] See p. 266. "Cornelius et Cyprianus *dormit.*"

[3] Similarly, in the Catacomb at Albano, where four Saints (Secundus, Severianus, Carpophorus, and Victorinus) were honoured on the 8th of August, we find by their side a picture of Smaragdus, who was honoured on the same day in one of the Roman Catacombs.—*Bullet.*, 1869, p. 73.

mity in front. On St. Urban there are crosses also on the shoulders, which are nowhere found on paintings or mosaics earlier than the tenth century.[1]

Probably of the ninth century.

Nor is this the only note of higher antiquity which may be recognised on these paintings at the tomb of St. Cornelius; the whole style of art is manifestly superior to that at the tomb of St. Cecilia. Indeed, the force and dignity expressed in the head of St. Cyprian would lead us to assign to it a much earlier date, did not other indications seem to point with some degree of certainty to the ninth century. These indications are yet more strongly noted in the painting on the other side of the tomb, on the wall at the end of the gallery. Here, too, are the figures of two other bishops, executed in the same style, each having been originally designated by his own proper name and title, though only one can now be deciphered. That one stands plainly SCS XVSTVS PP ROM; the name of the other began with O. It is extremely probable that this was St. Optatus, the saint whom we have had occasion to mention before, who was buried in this cemetery and was venerated in the Western Church on the 27th November down to the ninth century or later. The SCS XVSTVS is, of course, the second Pontiff of that name, whose connection with this cemetery has been already explained; and the title PP ROM is the same that we find given to other Popes down to the middle of the ninth century or later, the name *Papa* not having yet been confined to the Bishops of Rome.[2] It is found, for example, in one of the pictures lately discovered in the subterranean of San Clemente as the title of Leo IV., A.D. 847; and in the presbytery of Sta. Sabina of Eugenius II., A.D. 824. It is to Leo III., A.D. 795–815, that we would attribute the paintings we are now examining. It is

[1] Yet the *pallium* has two crosses on the coin of Cednoth, Archbishop of Canterbury, A.D. 831. See Ruding's "Annals of the Coinage of Great Britain," vol. iii. 1840. See Note F. in Appendix.

[2] See Ducange, Gloss. in Verb.

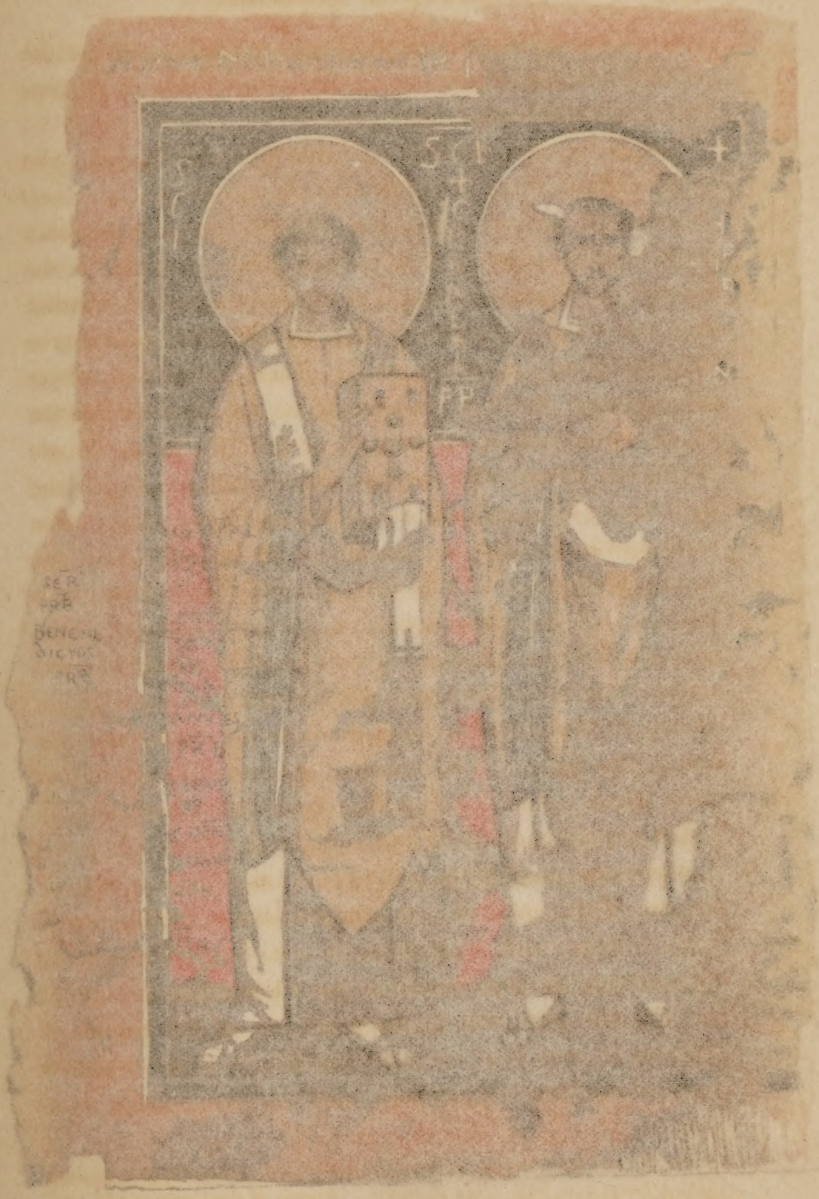

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Plate XI.

SCI
SCI
+CORNE
PP
SER
PRB
BENENE
DICTUS
PRB
LEOPRB
PRB
PRB
LEOPRB
TRVSPRB
+LEOPRB

expressly recorded of him in the "Liber Pontificalis" that "he renewed the Cemetery of SS. Xystus and Cornelius on the Appian Way;" and the legend which runs round these portraits has a singular significance, if we consider it as the work of this Pontiff. There is some difficulty in deciphering the latter part of the legend, but the earlier portion is clearly taken from the 17th verse of the 58th Psalm, and runs thus—"*Ego autem cantabo virtutem*[1] *Tuam et exaltabo misericordiam Tuam quia factus es et susceptor meus.*" "I will sing Thy strength, and will extol Thy mercy, for Thou art become my support;" and these words of thanksgiving would have been specially appropriate in the mouth of one who had suffered such extraordinary contradictions, calumnies, and misfortunes as Leo had, and had then been almost miraculously delivered out of the hands of his enemies, through the instrumentality of the Emperor Charlemagne. We can hardly doubt, then, that we have here some of that work of "renovation of the Cemetery of St. Xystus and St. Cornelius" which his biographer attributes to him.

Pillar in Crypt of St. Cornelius.

The low round block or pillar which stands by the side of Cornelius' tomb, and immediately before his picture, was much older than the time of Leo III., though we cannot say with certainty that it was made contemporaneously with the tomb itself, as we can of similar pillars in some other parts of the Catacombs. For this is not made out of the natural rock, as *they* are, but is a construction of masonry, covered with a somewhat coarse cement. De Rossi conjectures that it may at one time have supported the *mensa*, or altar, necessary for the celebration of the holy mysteries, which (we gather from Prudentius)[2] was not always directly over the body of the martyr, but only somewhere in the immediate neighbourhood.

[1] The Vulgate has here *fortitudinem*, but the version used in the Roman Church in older times had *virtutem*. See Tomasi, Opp. t. ii. p. 108.

[2] In Hippolyt. 171–175. See Note G. in Appendix.

Some such arrangement may have become necessary after the tomb of St. Cornelius had been closed by the work of Pope Siricius. Ordinarily, however, no doubt, there was placed here, as elsewhere at the martyrs' shrines, one of those large shallow vases, full of oil and precious unguents (*liquidi odores*, says Prudentius), with which the floating wicks of papyrus were always fed in these holy places, and from which the faithful were wont to carry off some few drops as a precious relic of the saint. Among the relics collected by John the Deacon for the Lombard Queen Theodelinda, one, *ex oleo S. Cornelii*, must have come from this very place; and, in fact, many fragments of a vase, saturated with some unctuous substance, have been collected from among the rubbish accumulated at this spot; as also in similar places in other parts of the Catacombs.

Bull., 1866, 72.

R.S., i. 31, 271, 272.
Bull., 1874, 30.

Graffiti.

Of the *graffiti* upon the painting of St. Cornelius we have nothing special to commemorate. They are not old and affectionate prayers, but the mere record of ecclesiastical names and titles, of men who either came here to offer the holy sacrifice, or to assist those who did; or, perhaps, once for all, to take part in the translation of the sacred relics. They are such as these: "*Leo prb.*, *Petrus prb.*, *Theodorus prb.*, *Kiprianus Diaconus*," &c., &c. Another and far more ancient *graffito* under the neighbouring archway runs in this wise, "*S̄ctus Cerealis et Sallustia cum xxi;*" and it is interesting to have recovered this scanty notice of these martyrs just where the old Martyrologies would have had us look for them; for, according to the Acts of St. Cornelius, recorded in Ado's Martyrology on the 14th September, Cerealis was the officer into whose custody the Pope was given, Sallustia his paralysed and bedridden wife whom he miraculously healed, and twenty-one was the number of soldiers and others who were converted by the miracle, and who suffered martyrdom together, and were buried by the pious care of Lucina. This *graffito* is

certainly of great antiquity, though it is impossible to fix its precise date; were it not for the contracted prefix of *Sctus*, De Rossi would have been almost tempted to look upon it as an original and contemporary memorial of the martyrdom.

CHAPTER VII.

ARENARIUM OF ST. HIPPOLYTUS.

Ineffectual attempts to explore the arenarium of Hippolytus—His history—Another area made in the time of Pope Liberius—Inscriptions to the memory of Deacons—Fragments of a laudatio or funeral discourse—This was one of the latest areæ—Its characteristics.

THE attentive reader will not fail to observe that there still remain several *areæ* in our map of which nothing has as yet been said. Our limits, however, will not allow us to specify everything, and in our present chapter we must bring to a conclusion our account of the Cemetery of Callixtus.

Arenarium of Hippolytus and other martyrs.

We shall briefly put together such particulars about the history or the contents of the remaining *areæ* as seem to us the most interesting or important. And we will begin with Area XIII., which is marked doubtfully as *arenarium Hippolyti.*

Their Acts.

In the account of the holy places of the suburbs of Rome, quoted in the History of William of Malmesbury, it is said that "not far from the Church of St. Soteris rest the martyrs Hippolytus, Adrianus, Eusebius, Maria, Martha, Paulina, Valeria, and Marcellus;" and all these names are found united in one history in the Acts of certain Greek martyrs which were known to Bosio, and edited (in a very imperfect manner) by Baronius. The Acts stated that these martyrs were buried in an *arenarium* on the Via Appia; and Bosio, not having a clue to the precise locality, conjectured that it had been united to the Cemetery of Prætextatus. In a very ancient collection of Roman inscriptions, made apparently in the first half of the seventh century,

two epitaphs are inserted immediately after that, which we have already seen, of St. Eusebius, which celebrate the praises of three or four out of this same group of martyrs. The first speaks of one Maria and her brother Neo, who, having distributed their wealth to the poor and converted large numbers to the Christian faith, finally suffered martyrdom; and it refers to the *Passio*, or Acts of their Martyrdom, for further particulars. From the second epitaph we learn that Hippolytus was one of many who came from Greece, all Pagan (*sacrilegam turbam quam Græcia misit*); that, in the course of the voyage, these strangers, probably having been overtaken by a storm, made a vow to the Stygian Jove; but on their arrival in Rome Hippolytus was converted to the Christian faith, after which he led a solitary life, spending his time in digging graves for the Christians, *i.e.*, he undertook the dangerous and laborious life of a *fossor*. By-and-by Adrias was converted, and Paulina his wife. Epitaphs in their honour.

There is no mention of any feast in honour of these martyrs in the Martyrologies that were compiled between the seventh and the sixteenth centuries; but De Rossi has shown that they had a place in the more ancient calendars, and he observes that the epitaphs we have quoted would not have been set up at a time when their names had fallen out of remembrance, but rather whilst their feasts were still kept; and he concludes, from internal evidence, that they were written probably in the fifth century, certainly not later than the sixth. The Acts, as we now have them, are of a later date; but we have seen that a version of them was in existence when the first epitaph was written; and, even in their present form, so severe a critic as Tillemont was disposed to attribute to them great authority. Incidentally they confirm much of what is stated in the epitaphs, and supply some particulars that were wanting; whilst, on the other hand, of some other particulars the epitaphs evidently give the more correct account. The Acts supply the links of relationship between all the persons spoken

of. It appears that either Adrias was the brother of Hippolytus or Paulina was his sister; they are called his *fratres*, and Maria and Neo, their children, were his *nepotes*. Hippolytus leads a life of concealment in an *arenarium*, where Stephen the Pope is also lying hid, under the persecution of Valerian. The children, both of whom are very young, ten and thirteen, bring their uncle food from time to time; and having one day been purposely detained by him, the parents come in quest of them. This incident leads to their conversion, partly by means of the arguments and exhortations of Hippolytus and Stephen, partly in consequence of a miraculous cure wrought by a priest named Eusebius and his deacon Marcellus. They distribute their large property among the poor, and in process of time are all arrested and martyred. Some time afterwards Valeria, Marthana, and other relatives come from Greece to make inquiries after them, and are themselves too converted and martyred; and then it is recorded of them all—what specially concerns the historian of the Catacombs—that they were buried in the same *arenarium* in which they had been wont to assemble and worship during life.

Their place of burial identified, but inaccessible.

An old Itinerary places their tombs near the Church of St. Soteris, and the calendars of which we have spoken assign the stations of their several feasts to the Cemetery of Callixtus. Here, therefore, De Rossi has taken infinite pains to find them; and we think there can be no doubt that he has so far succeeded that we now know where the *arenarium* lies, and have even gained access to it; but three times the labours of the modern *fossors* have been frustrated, and themselves put in imminent danger of being buried alive, by the falling in of large masses of the loose friable soil, just as they seemed to be completing their task. In 1856 they discovered a grand staircase, which descended through three successive *piani* of the cemetery, and was manifestly made to lead to some frequented sanctuary in the lowest depths of the underlying sandpit. In 1868 they almost reached the bottom of the

staircase, finding as they went many tokens that they were probably approaching the object of their search; and at length, in 1875, they effected an entrance into the *arenarium* itself. They marked the graves that had been made in the walls flanking the staircase and even under the very steps, the ancient works of masonry by which it had been attempted to strengthen the whole mass; they collected a few fragments of inscriptions, and had begun to penetrate into the interior galleries, when they were forced to fly for their lives, and all that they had with so much difficulty recovered was once more buried under such a mass of ruins that the undertaking was finally abandoned as impracticable.

What enhances the bitterness of this disappointment is the suspicion, or one may almost say the knowledge, that in the middle of the seventeenth century access to the Cemetery of Hippolytus was really gained; for one of three or four gravestones brought from a catacomb on the Via Appia to a church in Reggio in the year 1646 bore an inscription stating that the deceased had been buried AD EPOLITU, *i.e.*, near the tomb of St. Hippolytus. Among the fragments of stones which De Rossi has found in this place was one which, in like manner, recorded the making of a *bisomus* for a man and his daughter, AD DOM; unfortunately, however, the portion of the stone on which would have followed the name of the saint is wanting.

Area XII. made in days of Pope Liberius.

The area which intervenes between the *arenarium* of Hippolytus and the Cemetery of Soteris is called by De Rossi Liberian; not because there is any evidence to show that that Pontiff had anything to do with the making of it, but because it was certainly in use during his Pontificate. It was originally a separate cemetery, having its own staircase, and altogether independent of its neighbours on either side. Inscriptions have been found in it bearing the dates of 362, 363, 367, 374, and 376 A.D.; and other chronological indications exactly correspond to the same period. The gallery at the foot of the staircase is twice the ordinary width, and this not by reason of

any subsequent enlargement for the convenience of pilgrims, but in its original construction. In its principal crypt a fragment of stone has been found bearing part of a long metrical inscription in honour of a deacon named Redemptus; and in the oldest collection of Christian inscriptions this epitaph is joined on to another (which must therefore have been seen in the same place) in honour of another deacon named Tigris or Tigridas. It is impossible to read these epitaphs without suspecting their authorship; and accordingly the editor of the works of Pope Damasus has printed them in an Appendix, as being probably his. Of course he was persuaded to do this solely by the internal evidence furnished by the lines themselves. The conjecture is now almost changed into certainty by the present discovery that they belong to a part of the Catacombs which was being made in Damasus's time. They are not engraved in the beautiful Damasine type; but this is just what might have been expected if they were written in the younger days of Damasus, under his predecessor, Liberius. We know that Furius Dionysius Filocalus was living at that time, for he illustrated the famous Christian almanac in 354; but there is no proof that he ever exercised his art of caligraphy on public monuments before the Pontificate of Damasus, who was elected in October 366. Moreover, the epitaph itself contains one or two lines which coincide wonderfully with the history of that troubled period. The poet speaks of Redemptus almost in the same terms as he elsewhere uses about martyrs. He describes him as having met with much opposition during life, and as having won Paradise by a victorious fight against an enemy (*Nunc paradisus habet, sumsit qui ex hoste tropæa*). One of these lines occurs also in the epitaph of a Bishop Leo found in a Christian cemetery on the other side of Rome, and in like manner attributed to Damasus. Doubtless both the Bishop and the Deacon had suffered persecution, as Liberius himself did, at the hands of the Arians; and their persevering confession of the orthodox faith had won

Epitaphs in honour of deacons.

Bull., 1864, 55.

for them something of the honour, and even the title, that was given to martyrs. We seem to recognise traces of the same troublous times in the language of some of the inscriptions found in this Liberian *area; e.g.*, of a faithful virgin Secunda, who died A.D. 362, it is written that she lived twenty years *purâ fide;* and of a Victorina who lived fifty-five years, that she was *timens Deum, integra fide;* and it is doubtless for this reason also that the epitaph of another Christian, who died about the same time and was buried in another *area* of this same cemetery, ended with the unusual formula SUB LIBERIO PAPA.[1]

Fragments of a *laudatio.*

In the same chamber with the inscription of the Deacon Redemptus were found sixty or seventy fragments of an inscription of an altogether different kind. It belongs to the class of funeral discourses which were called *laudations*, and concerning which both Cicero and Livy complain that the extravagance of their panegyrics has corrupted the truth of history. The use of them seems to have been continued in Rome down to the end of the Middle Ages, and it is said that some traces of the practice even yet survive in small towns and villages of Tuscany. Only two specimens have been found among ancient Christian monuments in Rome; one of the fourth century in honour of a married lady named Cyriaca, who was buried in the cemetery of the same name attached to the Basilica of St. Laurence *in agro Verano*, and the other just now discovered in a part of the Cemetery of Callixtus belonging to the same date. This, however, is in so mutilated a condition that we cannot tell in whose honour it was written, nor what it was intended to say in his (or her) praise. But it is worth observing how, at the end of both these *laudations*, the simple pious prayers of earlier monuments are drawn out

[1] In De Rossi's second volume it was said *sub Liberio* EPISCOPO, the last word being confessedly supplied from the only other similar epitaph, which has *sub Damaso Episcopo.* Now, however, the other fragment of the inscription has been found, and we read *sub Liberio* PAPA. See "Epitaphs of the Catacombs," p. 115.

at greater length, and the same ideas expressed in more grandiloquent language. Thus, whereas we read in older epitaphs that the deceased sleeps in peace, and then a prayer is added that "the holy spirits may receive him," of Cyriaca it is said that "she has been translated from us to the rest of peace, and that for a testimony of her life the holy martyrs will be her advocates with God and Christ" (*a nobis ad quietem pacis translata, cuique pro vitæ suæ testimonium Sancti Martyres aput Deum et* ☧ *erunt advocati*); and so too, in the present instance, the writer, instead of merely appealing to the deceased to pray for him, first protests that he does not deserve this favour, and then goes on to beg him (or her), out of their love for him, to unite with him in praying God to forgive his sins (*Orat(o) Dominum tum, quod non mereor, uniter Dominum. . . prestes in orationis tuis ut possit amartias meas indulgere. Te in pacae*).

Characteristics of Area XII. testify to its date.

The area which we are now examining is the one which was so frequently visited by friars and others during the fifteenth century,[1] and it differs from every other part of the Catacombs in the greater freedom from encumbrance and accumulation of ruins which characterises it. Perhaps it was this very circumstance which caused it to be so much visited in preference to any other; and the explanation of the singularity seems to be this: No part of it belongs to the ages of persecution; it was not begun till the latter half of the fourth century, and at that time there was nothing to interfere with the perfect liberty of the *fossors*. They might carry on their work in any way they pleased; and, therefore, they were not only able to make galleries of unusual width, chambers with triple arches or recesses, or with four pillars cut out of the rock at the four corners, and very many and wide *luminaria*; but they were also able altogether to clear away out of the subterranean excavation all the soil which they displaced, instead of depositing it, as they had heretofore done, in other galleries

[1] See p. 28.

already used. Then, again, there were no tombs of martyrs here, for the visiting of which it was necessary after the time of Constantine to provide new and spacious entrances, to widen the passages, and make other important modifications of the original plan. For the same reason this *area* would not have attracted the visits of the Goths or Lombards or any other Barbarians seeking either for relics or for plunder; and lastly, some provision must certainly have been made for the closing of the *luminaria*, which otherwise could not have failed here, as elsewhere, to introduce tons upon tons of the superincumbent soil washed down by the rains.

Loss of its inscriptions.

One grave inconvenience, however, has resulted from the greater facility of access and freedom from encumbrance in this part of the Catacomb,—viz., that there has been both an earlier and a more complete clearance of the inscriptions which once belonged to it. These were probably removed by persons who had discovered the place and used the stones as mere building materials even before the fifteenth century, otherwise Platina would surely have mentioned them when he spoke of the chapels and of the "ashes and bones of the dead;"[1] indeed, these last would not have been seen had not the stones been removed underneath or behind which they once lay. Perhaps this accounts also for Bosio not having given any special description of this part of the cemetery, though his initials on the walls show that he had visited it.

Paucity of paintings.

He had found no inscriptions, and hardly any paintings. Indeed, at first sight, the visitor is disposed to think that there never were any paintings here; on closer inspection, however, this will be found to be a mistake. The *arcosolia*, which are here extraordinarily abundant—nearly a continuous series of them along the walls of the principal galleries—were generally ornamented with paintings; but, in consequence of the very inferior quality of the plaster, the damp has penetrated from the walls and almost destroyed them.

[1] See p. 29.

Some other characteristics.

Before leaving this *area*, there are one or two other particulars which deserve mention; first, the number both of ordinary graves and of *arcosolia*, the outlines of which have been traced on the walls but which were never excavated. On one of these are roughly sketched in very large letters the words *Arcosolius Cu . . , Cu* being evidently the beginning either of a proper name or of the words *cumparavit*, for *comparavit* (bought). This is just what we might have looked for in a branch of the cemetery made towards the end of the period during which the Catacombs remained in use as the burial-place of the Roman Christians. At that time the graves were chosen beforehand by the faithful and purchased from the *fossors*, and doubtless it was intended to record by these letters a memorandum of such a purchase. Secondly, in front of many of the graves, and even over some doorways of chambers, a narrow ledge supports one or more small terra-cotta lamps; near several of the *arcosolia* two semicircular niches are made, capable of receiving lamps of a much larger kind. And it is evident, from the position of some of these, in the immediate neighbourhood of *luminaria*, that they were used, not from any necessity of illumining the darkness, but with an intention of doing honour to the dead and testifying to the affectionate piety of their surviving relatives who took care to keep them burning, especially on the anniversary of the death, when religious services were celebrated in their behalf. Finally, it is to be observed that in many instances the front of the recess of these *arcosolia* has been bricked up, thereby destroying its whole character as an ornamental tomb; and it is clear, upon examination, that the object of this arrangement has been to provide more places of burial without the necessity of excavating fresh graves. One or more bodies have been laid upon the *mensa* of the *arcosolium*, and then a wall built up in front of the opening, even though, by so doing, paintings or inscriptions on the back of the recess have been lost to view. Of course there was no thought of spoiling the

arcosolium in this way when first it was made; and probably the persons buried in these places will have been near relatives, or at least members of the same family as the original occupants of the *arcosolia.* On the other hand, it is quite possible that amid the confusion incident upon the approach of the invading Barbarians, and at a time when the management of the Catacombs seems to have been practically in the hands of the *fossors*, they may not always have scrupled to bury strangers also in this convenient and economical way.

Other *areæ.*

The remaining *areæ* present little or nothing of any special interest, excepting to one who, like De Rossi, registers every mark and letter, every monogram and symbol, with a view to determining the precise chronology of each separate chamber and gallery; and even he complains of the dryness and difficulty of his task in some of the more intricate quarters of this cemetery. He perseveres, however, most conscientiously in the system he has prescribed for himself, and at last is able to attain not unimportant results. Thus he can distinctly trace the boundaries of two adjacent cemeteries, both of which were in use about the same time, and which in several places approached one another so closely that there remained the thinnest possible partition of rock between them, yet they were not united. Moreover, each has its own characteristic forms of architecture or decoration. It is clear that they were under different management; they belonged to different parishes, so to speak; each had its own body of *fossors* and painters, and its own superior. He is also often able to fix the chronological limits within which a particular *area* was used with wonderful exactness, according to certain canons suggested to him by his long experience, and daily more and more firmly established by every successive discovery. *Minutiæ* of this kind, however, can hardly be made interesting to the general reader; indeed, it is difficult even to make them intelligible without more plans and drawings than we can find room for. We shall, therefore,

take our leave of this vast Cemetery of Callixtus, after briefly recording two more facts—viz., that in one of its later portions De Rossi has found the one only Hebrew inscription that has ever yet been discovered in the Roman Catacombs; the name Scaphael is scratched in Hebrew characters, side by side with the Christian monogram, upon a batch of mortar attached for this purpose to the surface of the wall; and that in a still later gallery, on one of the last graves that was excavated in it, there was inscribed in a similar fashion one of the most recent of all the dates belonging to the Catacombs—viz., the year 407. The inscription stands thus:—

PRICIPIA
IN PACE
HONORIO VII C.

BOOK V.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE CATACOMBS.

CHAPTER I.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE CATACOMBS TO THEIR CHRISTIAN ORIGIN.

Scope of this part of the work—Catacombs used as burial-places by none but Christians—Pagan inscriptions in them accounted for—Their Christian origin first vindicated by Padre Marchi—First proof: the nature of the rock in which the Catacombs are excavated—The various volcanic strata of the Roman Campagna—Second proof: the form of the Catacombs as contrasted with that of pozzolana quarries—Instance of arenarium converted into the Catacomb of St. Hermes—Grounds of the theory of their Pagan origin stated and examined—Meaning of the term "crypta arenariæ"—Examination of passages in ancient records which seem to identify the arenaria with the Catacombs, viz., in the case of—1. St. Cornelius—2. The Quattro Coronati—3. Saints Crysanthus and Daria—4. St. Hippolytus, &c., on Via Appia—5. St. Crescentianus in Cemetery of Priscilla—These apparent exceptions prove the rule.

Scope of this portion of the work.

IN the preceding chapters our information has been principally drawn from the historical records which have come down to us from antiquity, and of which an account has been given in the second chapter of the First Book.[1] We have also taken our readers into the subterranean cemeteries, and confirmed our historical conclusions by the inscriptions and other monuments still remaining there. An important branch of our subject, however, still remains comparatively untouched, and this is what we may call the Testimony of the Catacombs themselves,—understanding by this expression, not the evidence to be drawn from the dates and names inscribed on the

[1] See page 17.

stones and walls, but the conclusions to be deduced from a careful examination of the subterranean galleries, and the method of their construction. This appears at first sight a dry and uninviting subject, but the results are too important to be passed over in silence, and the striking and incontrovertible confirmation which they give to many of our historical conclusions will amply repay the reader for the pains it will cost him to master the details.

The Catacombs used by none but Christians as burial-places.

The first question which we would ask of these long dark silent subterranean streets of tombs is, whether they are able to afford us any clue as to their own origin. The ignorant assertions of Burnet and Misson do not deserve a serious refutation. The former was foolish enough to publish his opinion that all the tokens of Christianity found in the Catacombs were the forgeries of a few monks in the fourth and fifth centuries, while the latter put forth the no less untenable theory that they were used "as marks of distinction to prevent the graves of the faithful from being confounded with those of the infidels." The exclusive use of the Catacombs by the Christians has now, however, been universally admitted,[1] and the only serious argument that was ever adduced against it, viz., the presence of a few Pagan inscriptions in these Christian cemeteries, has been found to tell in the opposite direction; for it is now ascertained that in every instance these Pagan inscriptions have some marks which prove that they were not originally intended for the position in which they have been found, but, like the stone on which the copy of the inscription to Pope Eusebius was written,[2] have been appropriated by Christians, and used for their own purposes. It is not enough, however, to establish the exclusively Christian use of the Catacombs as burial-places. We are able also to prove them to have been originally excavated by the Christians for that purpose, and this by the testimony of the Catacombs themselves.

Pagan inscriptions accounted for.

Until within a very recent period it was the generally

[1] The only exception being Mr. J. H. Parker.

[2] See page 337 and Note C. in Appendix.

received theory that these subterranean excavations had been made by the Pagan Romans in order to extract materials for building; and that the Christians, finding them convenient as places of concealment where their martyred brethren might rest undisturbed, had taken possession of them, and adapted them by additional excavations to the purposes of burial and worship. This theory was not, as we shall afterwards see, destitute of some apparent support from ancient documents, and was accepted by Baronius, Severano, Aringhi, and other writers upon the subject. Bosio himself is silent upon the origin of the Catacombs, and Boldetti, with all his knowledge acquired by personal observations, only ventures to claim a Christian origin for a few particular cemeteries. Padre Lupi went somewhat further, and showed that the additions made by the Christian *fossors* exceeded in extent the original works of the Pagan excavators; but Bottari, D'Agincourt, and Raoul-Rochette, all maintained the heathen origin of the Catacombs. Padre Marchi was the first to enunciate the proposition, that the Christians themselves had originated all those subterranean cemeteries which are known by this name. The weight of authority was strong against him, but he defended his proposition by proofs taken not so much from the works of learned authors, as from the cemeteries themselves. His investigations have been continued by the brothers De Rossi, and their patient labours have thrown so much additional light upon the subject, that the Christian origin of the Catacombs may be regarded as now firmly established. In order to understand the proofs of this conclusion, it will be necessary to give a brief notice of the geological strata in which the Catacombs have been excavated, and a portion of the carefully compiled Geological Summary in Murray's "Handbook to Rome" will perhaps be more satisfactory to our readers than any attempt of our own to condense the more diffuse account given by Michele De Rossi.

Padre Marchi the first to vindicate the Christian origin of the Catacombs, against a widely-received opinion to the contrary.

"By far the greatest part of the surface of the Roman Campagna, in the environs of the capital is formed of materials

Volcanic strata of soil around Rome.

of igneous origin. They may be classed under two heads, very different in their mineralogical characters, as they are in the mode in which they have been deposited, their age, &c. The more ancient, which appears to have immediately succeeded the Tertiary marine deposits, or even to have been contemporaneous with them, and to be the result of submarine volcanic action, consists, in the more immediate vicinity of Rome, and within the city itself, of a red volcanic tufa, formed by an agglomeration of ashes and fragments of pumice: it has been designated by the name of *tufa litoide* by the local geologists; and was, and still is, much used for building purposes. It forms the lower part of most of the Seven Hills on the left bank of the Tiber, constituting the Tarpeian rock beneath the Capitol, the lower portion of the Palatine, Quirinal, Esquiline, and Aventine. . . . . It is extensively quarried at the foot of Monte Verde, outside the Porta Portese, for building stone. . . . . No trace of the craters which produced this older tufa can now be discovered.

Tufa litoide.

"A certain interval appears to have occurred between the latter deposit and the more modern volcanic rocks of the Campagna, during which the land seems to have been raised, and several parts of it covered with fresh-water lakes or marshes. It is to this period that belong the strata of cinders, ashes, &c., which form the more immediate surface, which are often very regularly stratified, and certain impressions and leaves of land plants, and here and there a bed of calcareous gravel and marls, with land and fresh-water shells, and sometimes of fossil bones. . . . . But the greater part of these more recent volcanic rocks have been deposited on dry land; the beds are in general horizontal; the deposits of pozzolana or volcanic rocks, so extensively used for making mortar, belong to this period of subaërial volcanoes, the red *tufa granulare*, in which the Catacombs or early Christian cemeteries are hollowed out, and probably the more compact varieties of tufa known under the name of *peperino*, quarried at Albano and Marino."[1]

Pozzolana.

Tufa granulare.

[1] Murray's "Handbook of Rome," 1868, p. 321.

Such being the nature of the soil in the vicinity of Rome, the confidence of Padre Marchi in the old theory of the Pagan origin of the Catacombs was first shaken by his observing that they were excavated in the *tufa granulare* rather than in any other kind of rock. The *tufa litoide*, called by the ancients *lapis ruber* and *saxum quadratum*, affords numerous examples of ancient quarries, but not one instance of a Catacomb; while the pozzolana, esteemed so highly by Vitruvius as fulfilling all the conditions of the best sand for making cement,[1] and extensively quarried for that purpose, appears to have been carefully avoided by those who originated the Catacombs. The *tufa granulare*, from the quantity of earth which enters into its composition, would never be used for cement when the true pozzolana was procurable, while it is far too soft to be of any use as stone for building. Yet it is in this very stratum that have been excavated those vast systems of galleries which we call the Catacombs. The extreme improbability, therefore, of the Pagan Romans having constructed these galleries for no conceivable purpose is the first argument in favour of their Christian origin; for the *tufa granulare*, useless for other purposes, was admirably adapted for the reception of the dead. It is easily worked, of sufficient consistency to admit of being hollowed out into galleries and chambers without at once falling in, and its porous nature causes the water quickly to drain off from it, thus leaving the galleries dry and wholesome, an important consideration when we think of the vast number of dead bodies which once lined the walls of the subterranean cemeteries. Some of the Catacombs have been constructed in a rock still more unserviceable for building purposes than the *tufa granulare;* as, for instance, the Catacomb of San Ponziano on Monte Verde, and that of San Valentino on the Via Flaminia,

Catacombs excavated in *tufa granulare*

a proof of their Christian origin.

[1] Vitruvius, Arch. iii. 7, "ut ea sit idonea neque habeat terram commixtam . . . et quæ manu confricata fecerit stridorem erit optima . . . item si in vestimentum candidum ea conjecta fuerit, postea excussa vel icta non inquinaverit neque ibi terra subsiderit, erit idonea."

where the stratum is a mere marine or fluvial deposit, composed of earth, sand, shells, and pebbles, vegetable and animal fossils, &c., requiring solid substructions of masonry to resist its tendency to fall in. Such excavations could only have been made for the purpose of sepulture, and since the Christians alone used them for that purpose, we conclude that none but the Christians had any part in originating them.

Their general form contrasted with that of the sandpits, another proof,

The manner in which the Catacombs are constructed affords another proof of their exclusively Christian origin; especially when we contrast them either with the *arenifodinæ* or sandpits, which have been excavated both in ancient and modern times for the purpose of obtaining pozzolana, or with the *lapidicinæ*, as the ancient stone-quarries were called. In both these cases the object has been to extract the largest possible quantity of material with the least possible difficulty. Hence the passages are made as wide as possible, the arch of the roof springing from the floor, thus affording space for carts to be introduced to carry away the sand or stone. The same reason causes the excavators to avoid sharp angles, and to make the passages run in curved lines. Entirely different is the construction of the Catacombs. In them the walls are vertical, and the roof is very slightly arched and often quite flat; the passages are narrow, so as rarely to admit of two persons walking abreast; they run generally in straight lines, and they cross each other often at very sharp angles. Only the narrowest kind of hand-carts can be used by those who are now occupied in clearing them out, and hence the slowness and expense of the work. The latter consideration, indeed, might not have weighed with the Pagan Romans, who had an almost unlimited supply of slave-labour; but the comparison of a Catacomb with an undoubted ancient *arenifodina*, such as may easily be made at Santa Agnese, of a portion of which a plan has already been given,[1] will be more convincing than any description of the great difference between the two kinds of excavations.

[1] See Fig. 2 at page 5.

There are not, however, wanting instances in which *arenariæ* have actually been converted into Christian cemeteries, and these exceptions, which prove the rule, afford us the most convincing proof of the Christian origin of all the other Catacombs. We have one remarkable instance in a portion of

which is only strengthened by apparent exceptions to the rule;

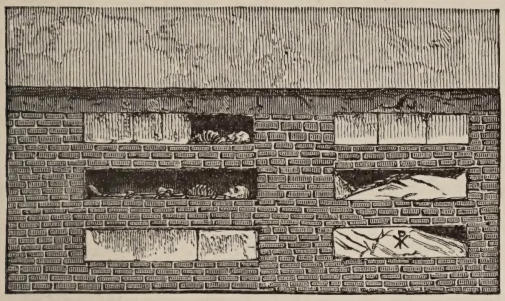


FIG. 35.—*Part of Wall of Gallery of St. Hermes.*

the first floor of the Cemetery of St. Hermes, in which the form and proportions of the galleries and of the *loculi* do not in appearance differ greatly from the general type; but a closer examination shows that their walls, instead of being cut in the rock, are constructed of masonry. The roof is of tufa, slightly arched, and often sustained by brickwork; the niches

such as the Cemetery of St. Hermes,

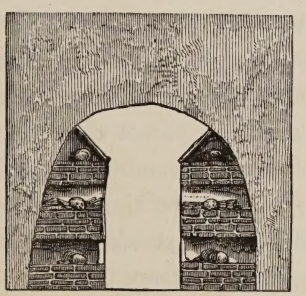


FIG. 36.—*Section of Gallery in St. Hermes.*

of the *loculi* are regularly formed in the two walls, and closed in the usual manner, with the exception of the uppermost range, the slabs at the mouth of which are laid obliquely, as in the section above (Fig. 36). The gallery is of the usual height, but when the brickwork is cleared away its breadth

is on an average two or three times that of an ordinary Catacomb; the section of the walls and roof forms a tolerably regular semi-ellipse. At the crossing of the galleries the span of the arch becomes greater, and the walls more inclined, and sometimes the roof is supported in the middle by a thick wall containing *loculi*, while the walls are strengthened at the base by brickwork, but contain no tombs. This instance

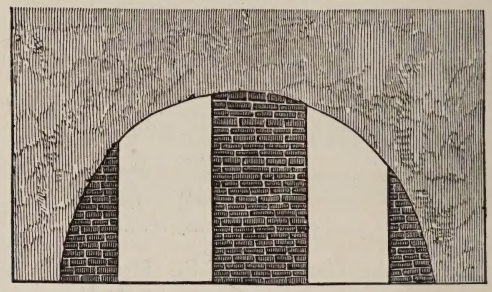


FIG. 37.—*Section of Gallery supported by Brickwork.*

which show the difficulty of converting an *arenaria* into a Catacomb.

is sufficient to show the alterations necessary in order to convert an *arenaria* into a Christian cemetery; whereas, if the theory of Raoul-Rochette were true, we ought to find in the Roman Campagna numbers of subterranean excavations destitute of tombs, with the narrow, straight galleries of the Catacombs. None such have been discovered, and we therefore conclude that the marked contrast between the Catacombs and the *arenariæ* proves that they had a different origin; for, although a Catacomb might easily be so amplified as to resemble an *arenaria*, nothing could convert an *arenaria* into a Catacomb except a process which would tell its own story as plainly as in the instance just described.

How the theory of their Pagan origin came to be accepted.

It may, however, not unreasonably be asked, if the Catacombs themselves bear so conclusive a testimony to their Christian origin, how came the theory of their having been originally excavated by Pagans to be so generally received by learned men? This question must be satisfactorily answered before our readers can feel confidence in the arguments by

which we have proved our case. The fact is, that, as we have already hinted, learned men formed their theory of the origin of the Catacombs rather from a supposed historical tradition than from the examination of the cemeteries themselves. This tradition rested on the words in ancient documents which describe the burial-places of certain martyrs and others as *in arenario*, or *juxta arenarium*, or *in cryptis arenariis*. Thus, it is stated in some copies of the "Liber Pontificalis" that Lucina buried Pope Cornelius in her own property *in crypta juxta cœmeterium Callisti in arenario;* the Acts of Saints Hippolytus, Eusebius, Marcellus, and their companions relate that "St. Stephen, the bishop, collected their remains, and buried them on the Via Appia, at the first mile from the city of Rome, in the very *arenarium* in which they were wont to assemble;"[1] the Acts of Saints Nereus and Achilles tell how "Auspicius carried off their bodies, and buried them in the property of Domitilla *in crypta arenaria*, on the Via Ardeatina;"[2] the Acts of Saints Marcus and Marcellianus likewise mention those martyrs having been buried "two miles from the city in the place which is called *Ad arenas*, because there were the sandpits (*cryptæ arenarum*), from which the walls of the city were built;"[3] the Acts of St. Susanna represent her as buried *in cœmeterio Alexandri, in arenario in crypta juxta S. Alexandrum.* Other copies have *juxta corpora SS. Chrysanti et Dariæ via Salaria in arenario.*[4] On the same Via Salaria Nova, St. Crescentianus, martyr, was buried *in cœmeterio Priscillæ in arenario;*[5] on the Via Labicana, about three miles from Rome, the bodies of the Quatuor Coronati were buried with other saints *in arenario;*[6] and lastly, St. Tertullinus "was led out to martyrdom to the second milestone on the Via Latina,

Passages in ancient records which seem to identify the burial-places of Christian martyrs

[1] See Bosio, Rom. Sott., p. 193.
[2] Ib., p. 192.
[3] Ib., p. 186.
[4] Ib., p. 481; and Bolland. Acta SS. August., ii. p. 625.
[5] Aringhi, Rom. Sott., tom. ii. p. 219.
[6] Bosio, p. 319.

and St. Stephen buried his body at the same place, *in crypta arenaria.*"[1] These passages from ancient documents certainly establish a connection between the *arenariæ* and *some* at least of the Catacombs; and when we recall the passage where Cicero describes the murder of the young Asinius, *in arenarias quasdam*, outside the Esquiline gate,[2] or the still more famous saying of Nero, when in his last extremity he was urged to conceal himself for a time in these subterranean caverns (*in specum egestæ arenæ*), and he refused to be buried before he was dead (*negavit se vivum sub terram iturum*);[3] we cease to be surprised at the theory of the Pagan origin of the Catacombs, which appear to be so identified with the ancient sandpits.

with Pagan sandpits.

Examination of these passages, of which there are at most nine in number.

A careful examination, however, of the ancient documents proves that the eight passages quoted above are the *only* instances to be found in which Christian burials are said to have taken place in *arenariæ*. It is true that if we include the accounts of martyrs buried at Nomentum and other places beyond the circle of the Roman Catacombs, a few more examples may be collected. But confining ourselves within a range of five or six miles from Rome, we find that there is no mention of *arenariæ* in connection with any of the cemeteries on the Via Ostiensis, Portuensis, Aurelia, Cornelia, Triumphalis, Flaminia, Salaria Vetus, Nomentana, or Prænestina. On the Via Tiburtina, indeed, Constantine is said to have built a Basilica, *in Agro Verano super arenariam cryptam;* and Bosio sees reason to think that the saints buried there were Saints Narcissus and Crescentius, companions in martyrdom with St. Lawrence. Thus we have, at the most, nine different sepulchres of martyrs in *arenariæ* or *cryptæ arenariæ*. The latter expression occurs three times, viz., as the locality of the sepulchre of Nereus and Achilles, on the Via Ardeatina; of St. Lawrence, on the Via Tiburtina; and of Tertullinus, on the Via Latina. During the recent restoration

The term *cryptæ arenariæ* does not imply pozzolana pits.

[1] Bosio, p. 300.
[2] Pro Cluentio, 14.
[3] Sueton. in Neron. 48.

of the Basilica of *San Lorenzo fuori le mura*, there were unusual facilities for examining the rock in the neighbourhood of that Basilica. Every one might convince himself that it is composed of a material quite different from pozzolana. It is, in fact, what is vulgarly called in Rome *capellaccio*, and is utterly useless for building purposes. And yet in this rock lies the whole Catacomb of St. Cyriaca. The same must be said of the rock in which is formed the Cemetery of Domitilla. The sepulchre of Tertullinus is not yet identified, and therefore cannot be examined, but the other two examples are sufficient to prove that the expression *crypta arenaria* merely denotes an excavation made in a sandy kind of rock, and does not necessarily imply the existence of an *arenarium* or sandpit proper. As to the sepulchre of Saints Marcus and Marcellinus, Padre Marchi justly observes that it is not said that those martyrs were buried *in cryptis arenarum*, but *in loco qui dicitur Ad arenas*,[1] and, therefore, merely in the neighbourhood of "the pits from which the walls of the city were built."

There remain then five passages in ancient documents which mention martyrs being buried *in arenario*, a term certainly denoting a pozzolana pit. The first of these, relating to Pope Cornelius, is not found in all the MSS. of the "Liber Pontificalis," but as there really is a stratum of pozzolana in that Catacomb at a lower level than the stratum in which his crypt was made,[2] some excavations there may have led later copyists to add the expression *in arenario*, in order, as they probably thought, the more distinctly to identify the spot. Of the four remaining passages, three describe localities which can be identified, and which correspond exactly with the description, for there is in each of them excellent pozzolana precisely at the same level with the galleries of the Catacomb. De Rossi has not yet succeeded in finding any good pozzo-

Five remaining passages: 1. Pope Cornelius;

[1] Compare *Ad Catacumbas*, and similar appellations of places.

[2] See map accompanying this volume, Area I. *b*, *d*, *g*, *h*. Compare Section in Fig. 38, Stratum V. *g*. *Infra*, p. 394.

2. Quattro Coronati;

lana in the Cemetery of Marcellinus and Peter, which is supposed by Bosio to be the locality indicated by the fourth passage, which describes the burial of the *Quatuor Coronati;* but the artists employed to draw the plan of that Catacomb for Bosio's work seem to have penetrated into a portion of the ancient *arenarium*, for their drawing represents some passages resembling those of pozzolana rather than the galleries of Catacombs, and in their description they speak of "a large grotto without tombs, like a stone quarry;" and again, "a wide place where the tombs have been destroyed to get out the pozzolana."[1] It will be more satisfactory to our readers if we examine carefully the three passages mentioned above, in order that we may thoroughly satisfy ourselves whether they do in truth prove or disprove the theory to which they apparently gave rise.

3. SS. Chrysanthus and Daria;

First, there is the *arenarium* in which were buried the martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria, on the Via Salaria Nova. The "Liber Pontificalis" states that Pope Adrian I. "restored the Basilica of St. Saturninus on the Via Salaria, together with the Cemetery of SS. Chrysanthus and Daria." Now these saints were not only buried *in arenario*, but the Emperor Numerian "ordered them to be led out on the Via Salaria, and put down *in arenario*, . . . and there to be both of them blocked up alive with earth and stones." This *arenarium* was identified and described by Bosio and Marangoni; and it may still be observed that, in one part of the Catacomb, the galleries widen out into the form of an *arenarium*, and the *loculi* are diminished in number, so that there are only two tiers of them, one above the other. This has evidently been done in order to avoid weakening the walls, which are sloping and of good pozzolana. In fact, as we pass from the Catacomb into the *arenarium* proper, we find even these attempts to convert the latter into a cemetery disappear, and there are evident traces of the Christians having blocked up the

[1] Bosio, p. 591, D.

passages in order to prevent access to a region unfitted for sepulture; while in the immediate vicinity of one of the galleries thus blocked up, a flight of steps leads down to a lower level, where we find a Christian Catacomb of the ordinary type. We have, therefore, here another instance of the Christians having made an attempt, as at St. Hermes, to utilise the *arenarium*, but it appears that they found it more convenient to abandon that attempt, and to construct entirely new galleries, even at the cost of descending to a greater depth into the bowels of the earth.

4. SS. Hippolytus, Eusebius, &c. on Via Appia.

Next, we must examine the passage of the Acts of Saints Hippolytus, Eusebius, Marcellus, and their companions, which relates their burial by Pope St. Stephen "on the Via Appia, at the first mile from the city of Rome, in the very *arenarium* in which they were wont to assemble." De Rossi would not for some years undertake to say that he had identified this *arenarium* with the same certainty as the one just described; but he has now, as we have already shown, become so satisfied of the identity of this Area XIII., that he has called it the Arenarium of Hippolytus. We have noticed elsewhere the abnormal character of this cemetery, and its peculiar connection with the *arenarium*, and, if De Rossi is right in supposing this *arenarium* to be the one in which Christians were wont to assemble for worship during a time of persecution, its connection with the Catacomb is sufficient to account for St. Stephen being said to have buried the martyrs in *arenario*, when in fact he buried them in the cemetery adjoining.

5. St. Crescentianus in Cemetery of St. Priscilla;

The last passage to be examined is that which relates how the martyr Crescentianus was buried *in cœmeterio Priscillæ in arenario* on the same Via Salaria Nova. Every one who has visited the central and more ancient part of that Catacomb has remarked how greatly it differs from the usual type. Numerous pillars, of various sizes; long walls of solid masonry, sometimes straight, sometimes broken into angles, both concealing and sustaining the tufa and the tombs in the galleries;

FIG. 38.—*Plan of Part of Catacomb of St. Priscilla.*

the graves often interrupted by pillars of brickwork;—all these peculiarities show the immense labour that was required to convert the original excavation into its present form. The plan on the preceding page will render this more unmistakably evident, for the masonry is represented by light shading, the tufa rock being shaded darkly, so that the original excavation is at once distinguished from the form into which it was afterwards converted. The wide passages of the *arenarium* are to be traced in the portions marked A, while the Catacomb galleries are marked C. The shaft B was originally a pit for extracting pozzolana from the *arenarium*, but was afterwards modified so as to form a large *luminare*. Here, then, is actually a Catatomb having its origin in an *arenarium*, but the examination of its plan is sufficient to prove the impossibility of many of the Christian cemeteries having been so constructed.

The examination of these instances, so far from leading us to suppose that an *arenarium* was the ordinary matrix of a Catacomb, suggests the very opposite conclusion, since the difference between the one and the other is so marked as to strike the most ordinary observer, and yet these and two others are all the examples of their connection which have been noticed by the explorers of the last three hundred years.[1] We argue, therefore, thus:—The ancient documents in four or five passages seem to speak as though the martyrs had been buried in sandpits. In five cemeteries out of twenty-five or thirty, an *arenarium* is found more or less closely connected with the cemetery, and of these, three are discovered to be identical with three of those mentioned in the ancient records. We consequently conclude that what is mentioned so seldom by ancient writers, and found so seldom by modern explorers, could not have been the normal

These apparent exceptions thus prove the rule.

[1] In fact, what Bosio calls the "*singularity*" of the portion of the Cemetery of St. Priscilla, and of that near St. Saturninus described above, has been commented upon by nearly every writer on the subject, from Bosio's time to the present day.

condition of things, but, on the contrary, that these instances were deemed worthy of special mention as being exceptions to the general rule, and thus these examples form one of the most convincing proofs of the Christian origin of the Catacombs generally.

CHAPTER II.

MODE OF THEIR CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT.

Localities of cemeteries—Different piani or flats one below another—Formation of Catacomb of St. Callixtus—Different areæ—Area of St. Cecilia and the Popes—How distinguished;—First period of construction;—Second period—lowering the floor of the galleries;—Third period—necessity of concealment, connection with arenarium;—Fourth period—a second area incorporated with cemetery—arcosolia;—Fifth period—filling up galleries with earth;—Last period—works of St. Damasus—Summary of the process of the development of a Catacomb.

Scope of this chapter.

WE have seen how the Catacombs bear witness to their Christian origin, and furnish a reply to the difficulties that have been urged against this now established fact. It remains for us to examine them still more carefully, and to extract from them, if possible, an account of the mode of their construction, the successive additions and modifications which they received from time to time, the traces to be found in them of the relations in which these Christian cemeteries stood at various periods to the Roman laws, and of the condition of the Roman Church in times of persecution and of peace. We have already traced these various relations in our historical chapters, and if we find those observations borne out by the testimony of the Catacombs themselves, we shall be repaid for having mastered the somewhat dry and uninviting portion of our subject which now lies before us, for we shall have examined an independent and perfectly unexceptionable witness to the truth.

We have already noticed some of the circumstances which determined the locality of the early Christian cemeteries.

Locality of Christian cemeteries.

Distance from the city.

The laws obliged them to be outside the walls, and convenience required that they should not be too far away from the city. The ancient documents give us a radius of from one to three miles from the wall of Servius Tullius as the zone within which most of the cemeteries were situated, and it is precisely within this zone that we see in the present day the entrances to all the principal Catacombs. Between the third and fifth mile from the walls, no Christian sepulchre has been found; at the sixth only one, that of St. Alexander; while beyond the seventh mile from the city tombs are again met with, but these belong rather to the towns and villages of the Campagna than to Rome itself.

On high ground.

A further cause which determined the situation of the Christian cemeteries was the geological condition of the soil within the limits stated above. Had they been excavated in deep valleys, they would have been constantly exposed to the danger of being flooded by the neighbouring streams, or at any rate by the filtration of water, which, besides impeding access to the cemeteries, would have greatly accelerated the putrefaction of the bodies, and corrupted the air, in spite of the careful closing of the *loculi*. The Cemetery of Castulo, on the Via Labicana, is an instance of this. Being in a somewhat low situation, it is now quite inaccessible, from the water and the clay with which the galleries are filled, and it bears signs of having been from the first an exceptional excavation. The pains taken by St. Damasus to prevent the water damaging the tomb of St. Peter on the Vatican are commemorated in his usual manner:—

"Cingebant latices Montem, teneroque meatu
Corpora multorum cineres atque ossa rigabant.
Non tulit hoc Damasus, communi lege sepultos
Post requiem tristes iterum persolvere pœnas.
Protinus aggressus magnum superare laborem,
Aggeris immensi dejecit culmina Montis.
Intima sollicite scrutatus viscera terræ,
Siccavit totum quidquid madefecerat humor,

Invenit Fontem, præbet qui dona salutis.
Hæc curavit Mercurius Levita Fidelis."

"The waters used to surround the hill, and with their gentle flowing used to drench the bodies, ashes, and bones of many [saints]. Damasus did not suffer this [to go on],—that those buried after the law common to all should be disturbed in their rest, and again suffer sad punishment. So at once he set himself to conquer the formidable difficulty, and cut away the ridge of an immense bank of the hill. He diligently dived into the very bowels of the earth, and drained the whole of that which the damp had moistened. He discovered the spring, which [now in the baptismal font] conveys the gifts of salvation. Mercurius, his faithful deacon, had charge of these works."

Cemeteries in *tufa granulare:*

The Christian cemeteries were thus restricted to the high ground, and there, in fact, we find them; and this circumstance alone was sufficient to prevent any line of communication having existed, either between the various Catacombs, or between them and the churches within the city. We have already remarked how the Christian cemeteries were almost always excavated in the *tufa granulare*, rather than in any stratum of rock. Another characteristic, depending to a certain extent upon the geological formation, is, that the different levels, or *piani* of excavation in the same cemetery, are quite distinct from each other. Hardly ever does a gallery lead gradually down from a higher to a lower level; the descent is made by a flight of steps. The preservation of the horizontal plane throughout each *piano* was a wise precaution against danger to the roof or to the floor of the galleries and chambers, for, if the horizontal plane had been departed from, it would have been almost impossible for the *fossors*, unaided by scientific instruments, to have avoided running one gallery into another. An accident of this kind on the same plane would cause but little damage, but the safety of a whole chamber, or even of a whole gallery, would have been imperilled by the excavation of another, either close above or close below it. Hence the principal levels are separated by a very wide interval, and if between them small galleries are sometimes found, these are a later work, of very limited extent, and resemble

the galleries of each *piano* horizontal.

those little rooms which are to be seen between the first and second stories of large houses in Rome, and which are called *mezzanini.*

Different *piani* one below another.

The section in this woodcut will convey a general idea of the depth below the surface at which the different *piani* are

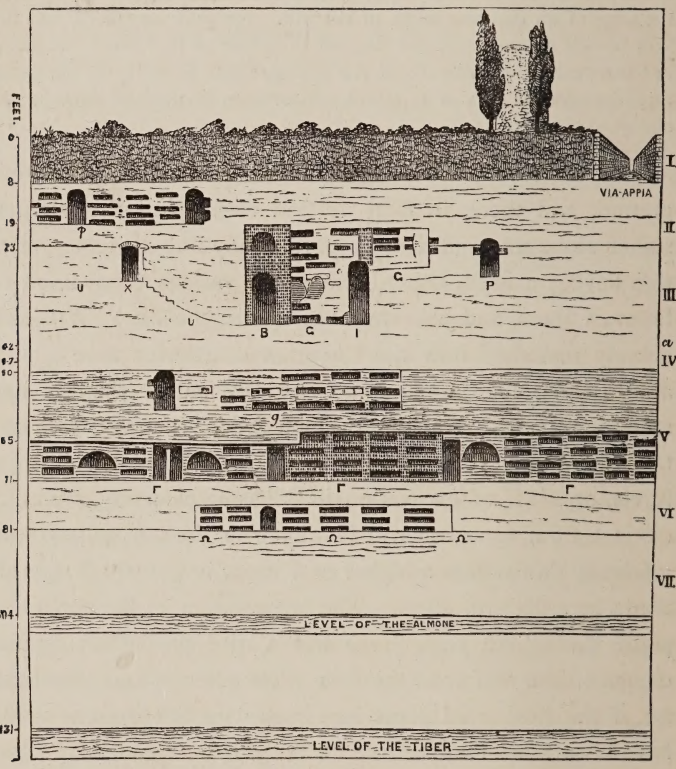


FIG. 39.—*Section of the Cemetery of St. Callixtus.*

excavated. It is a section of the Crypt of St. Lucina, immediately beneath the vast ruined monument already described.[1] The floor of the gallery Φ is not more than twenty feet below the surface of the soil, and in some places not above ten; so that had it been continued on the same plane, it must have run out into the open air, in consequence of the slope of the hill.

[1] See page 278.

This *piano* is consequently very small, and it is in fact the only specimen of a gallery being excavated so near the surface. The stratum in which this gallery was formed is composed of a friable *tufa granulare*, of a grey colour, and full of amphigene, a kind of garnet, and here and there black augite. This is marked II.; and the stratum I. above it is made up of earth and stones, ruins of ancient monuments, and other materials. Stratum III. is composed of a less solid kind of tufa without those crystals, and this was the favourite stratum of the Christian *fossors*, in which we find the most ancient and most important *piano* of galleries. The section shows how P, X, and U were excavated, with the roof of those galleries coinciding with the junction of this with the stratum above. By this means the *fossors* secured a more solid kind of rock for the ceiling, and the difference of colour, and the sparkling of the crystals in the rock which forms the roof, when compared with that in which the *loculi* are cut, frequently arrests the attention of those who visit this Catacomb. About the point *a*, this stratum insensibly merges into the pozzolana proper, although between them there is sometimes a thin stratum of stones and cinders in fine volcanic sand, with crystals and bits of mica. This occasionally has become solidified by the action of water into *tufa litoide*. Stratum V. is pozzolana proper, and here a low and narrow gallery has been excavated, marked *g* in the section, which would terminate here if it were simply a vertical section of the galleries beneath this ruined monument. De Rossi, from whose work this (Fig. 38) is copied, has, however, added below the line which crosses stratum V. a section of a portion of the Catacomb of St. Balbina, the principal *piano* of which is very nearly of the same level with U and X, the principal *piano* here, but whose position may be found on De Rossi's map by the reference L *c*, 1, 2, and I *b*, 1.[1] By this means we have a comparative view

Geological strata.

[1] These are situated too far to the north to be included in the map accompanying this volume, but are marked in De Rossi, tom. i. tav. xl.

of another lower *piano* in the pozzolana, marked Γ Γ Γ; and in stratum VI., which is composed of *tufa granulare* again, we have a still lower gallery, Ω Ω Ω, so deep that the air becomes less easy to breathe, and a limit is put to the excavation by the water, which almost always inundates the gallery at this level. The rock VII. beneath this is impervious to water, and has not been examined. The levels of the Tiber, and of a little stream which crosses the Via Appia, called the Almone, are given from Father Secchi's measurements of the trigonometrical base on the Via Appia.

Formation of the Catacomb of St. Callixtus.

Having obtained a general idea of the mode in which the various *piani* of galleries were constructed, we may proceed to inquire into the manner in which the galleries and chambers on the same *piano* were formed; and as the necropolis of St. Callixtus is the only Catacomb of which a full and scientifically accurate plan has yet been published, we will confine our observations to this great cemetery. The first impression conveyed by a glance at the map accompanying this volume is that of an inextricable confusion; but, as we have already remarked, a more careful examination, aided by the various colours which distinguish different parts of the map, enables us to recognise a certain order in the disposition of the galleries within each of these divisions, so that we are prepared to acquiesce in Michele De Rossi's assurance that each of these

Distinct *areæ*.

portions originally formed a separate cemetery, the *area* of which was defined and protected by the Roman law. The measurements of these *areæ*, reduced to Roman feet, singularly confirm this observation, since it can hardly be an accident that they should form such round numbers as 100, 125, 150, 180, and 250 feet. But the fact is put beyond all reasonable doubt by a minute examination of the galleries themselves, and of the points at which those of one *area* now communicate with those of another. It would be impossible for us, in a work of this size, to follow De Rossi through his careful analysis of each gallery and chamber, and almost of every

tomb, by which he demonstrates the truth of his conclusion; and we shall therefore content ourselves with the results of De Rossi's examination of a single *area*, for the minute analysis of which we must refer our readers to a separate chapter. We shall select the *area* which includes the tombs of the Popes and of St. Cecilia, which have been already described, and which history teaches us to regard as the most important of all the ancient cemeteries, being, in fact, the *cœmeterium* administered by the Pope's archdeacon. It would, of course, be unfair to conclude that the architectural characteristics of this *area*, and its successive developments, formed a type which was universally followed in the construction of other cemeteries. The circumstances of the soil, the wealth of the proprietor, or the architectural notions of the persons who superintended the excavation, doubtless varied in the different Catacombs. Nevertheless, since the laws affected all Christian cemeteries alike, and the necessities for increased accommodation or for concealment came at the same periods upon the whole Christian population, the account which we are about to give of this great and important cemetery will enable us to trace the leading features of the changes and successive developments of other Catacombs.

Area III. *Area* of St. Cecilia and the Popes.

The great necropolis, which forms what is called the Catacomb of St. Callixtus, is bounded by the Via Appia and the Via Ardeatina, and the tract of ground between these two public ways was anciently traversed by two small cross-roads which connected them, and which we will call Via Appio-Ardeatina. It will be seen by the map that most of the staircases which led into the *hypogæa* were either parallel or at right angles to one or other of these roads, and that the different *areæ* into which the necropolis is divided, each with its own staircase, have a clearly-defined frontage along them. Confining our attention to the *area* of St. Cecilia (marked III. in the map), we will proceed to trace its architectural development from its first construction to its latest transformation.

Public and private roads.

First period of excavation.

A plot of ground, measuring 250 Roman feet along the small cross-road, and extending back 100 feet *in agro*, was secured by its Christian proprietor as a burial-place with the usual legal formalities. The plan of the excavation was then determined, and, as occasion required, was carried out in the manner indicated in Fig. 40, which is drawn on a scale of $\frac{1}{1000}$.

The two parallel galleries, A and B, each with its staircase communicating with the surface, appear to have been excavated about the same time, and extended the full length of the

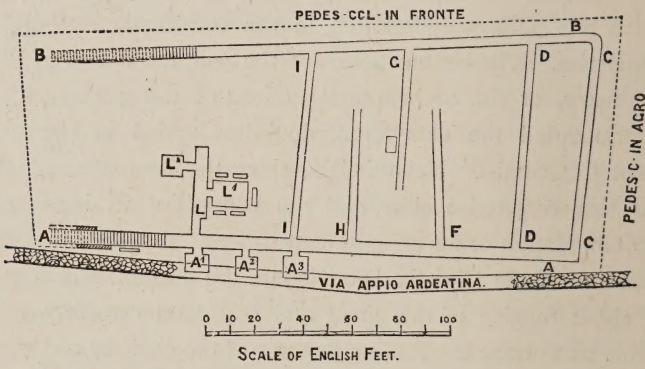


FIG. 40.—*First Period of Excavation.*

area. The gallery C connecting them appears from the marks of the pickaxe in its walls to have been commenced from the corner A C. The *ambulacra*, A and B, were also united by the two other galleries D and I; and the original design appears likewise to have provided for the passages F, G, H, which, however, were not, during this first period, completed to their full extent. The gallery L, with the Papal Crypt L^1, and the chamber L^2, belong to this period, as also do the *cubicula* A^1, A^2, A^3, whose painted walls have been described in a former chapter.[1]

Our readers will here fairly ask, upon what grounds do we

[1] Chapter VI. of Book IV.

thus positively assert that such and such a gallery belongs to this or that period of excavation, and pretend to give the exact dimensions of the *area* as gravely as though we were in possession of the original legal documents which defined them. To the latter question we reply, that this *area* is at once marked off from the adjacent *areæ* of the Catacomb by its floor being about five feet lower in level than theirs. With respect to the period in which the different galleries were formed, it may certainly be taken as an axiom, that when the *loculi* in the walls of an *ambulacrum* are broken through in order to afford an entrance into a gallery, this portion of the

How it can be distinguished.

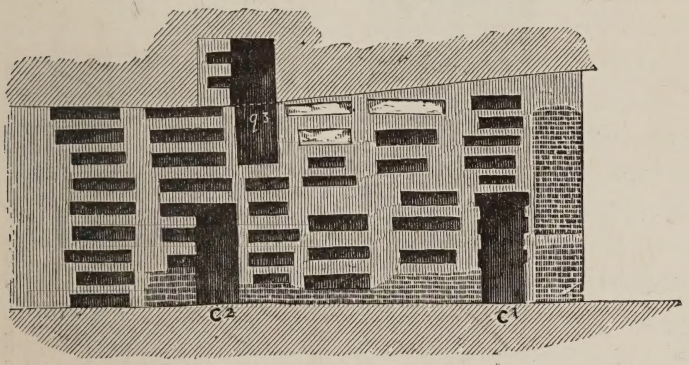


FIG. 41.—*Outer Wall of Ambulacrum* C.

gallery at least is of a later date than the *ambulacrum* into which it enters, and did not form part of its original plan. Thus, in Fig. 41, which represents the outside wall of the gallery C, the entrances to C^1 and C^2 have been broken through three or four *loculi*, which have been strengthened afterwards by masonry.[1] It is therefore evident that the galleries C^1 and C^2 were not contemplated in the original plan of the gallery C, and were constructed at a much later date. This observation, however, only affects the outside walls of B and C, and enables us to exclude from the original plan all those passages which now branch out from them; but it does not account for our representing F and H as stopping short of

[1] See Plan at the end of this book.

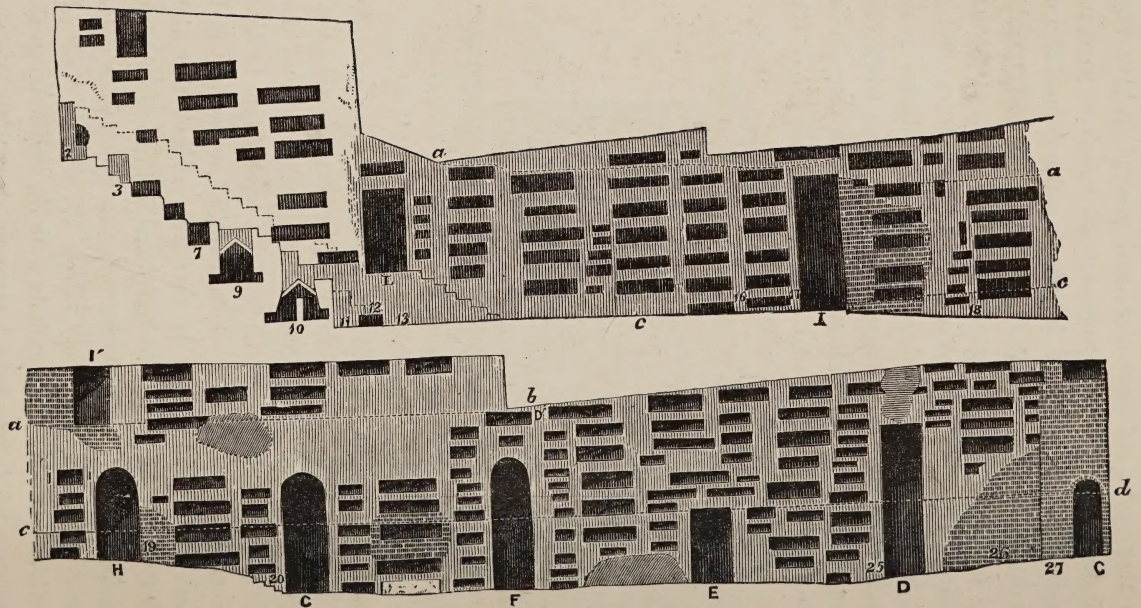


FIG. 42.—*Elevation of Inner Wall of Ambulacrum A.*

Scale about $\frac{1}{220}$. The dotted line *a b* marks the original roof, and *c d* the original level of the floor.
The letters and numbers in this section correspond to those in the plan which accompanies the descriptive analysis.

B, and G, in the same manner, as not having originally extended so far as to fall into A. Our grounds for so representing these galleries will appear from an examination of the woodcut on the opposite page (Fig. 42), which gives the elevation of the whole of the inner or left-hand wall of the *ambulacrum* A, as it exists at the present day, and shows the relative sizes and positions of the entrances into the cross galleries D, E, F, G, H, I, and L. Now it is obvious that the entrance D could never have been constructed at the height of 15 feet, which it now reaches, and it can be proved that the original level of the floor of the *ambulacrum* must have been that indicated by the dotted line *c d*. This level would give the entrance to D a height of about 7 feet, that to F a somewhat lower elevation, but still sufficient for practical purposes; while the entrance to G, being yet lower, was in all probability not excavated until the floor of the *ambulacrum* A had been lowered, and the gallery E could not possibly have been constructed until after that had been done. A similar examination of B would prove in like manner that F and H did not fall into that *ambulacrum* until after its floor had been lowered; but we have said enough to show that our plan has not been arbitrarily drawn, and for further details we must refer our readers to the descriptive analysis.

Second period —lowering the floor of the galleries.

The lowering of the floor of the galleries marks what we may call the second period of excavation. The necessity of providing more space for graves, and the confidence in the consistency of the rock which practice had given the *fossors*, led them to adopt this method of enlarging the cemetery. They appear to have commenced with the *ambulacrum* B, and to have continued the work along C until they reached A. In this latter gallery, however, the change of level was by no means uniform, and was never carried out to the extent contemplated when the chambers A^4, A^5, A^6, were constructed. These *cubicula* were evidently excavated in anticipation of a much greater depression of the floor of the *ambulacrum*, for we

now enter them by descending some steps, whereas we have to ascend in order to reach A^2 and A^3 from the gallery, which is there at its original level. A reasonable explanation of this variation is, that the *fossors* had presumed too much upon the strength of the rock, and finding themselves obliged to support the wall by the mass of brickwork which now forms the corner 27 C,[1] they deemed it more prudent to abandon the design of reducing the whole gallery to the same level with B and C. This work, together with the completion of the galleries F, G, and H, and the construction of a new one E, marks the termination of the second period of excavation, when the plan of the cemetery must have been such as it is represented in Fig. 43.

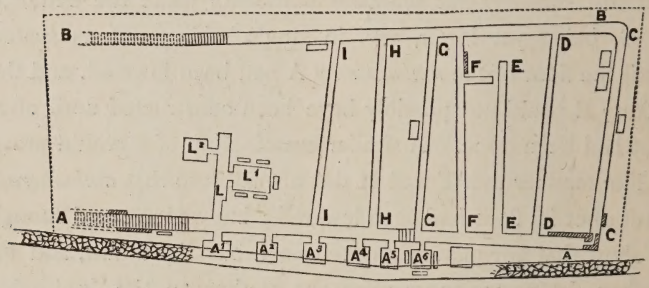


FIG. 43.—*Second Period of Excavation.*

Third period.

We now come to a third period in the construction of this cemetery. The further enlargement of the *ambulacra* having proved dangerous, the *fossors* were compelled to attempt the construction of another system of galleries at a lower level. In order not to endanger the existing *hypogeum* it was necessary to go to a considerable depth, and we find a staircase leading from the cross gallery H, and consisting of thirty-four steps. They had hardly, however, penetrated below the former level, when they found that they had passed through the *tufa granulare*, and were in a stratum of very friable pozzolana. The very walls of the staircase had to be pro-

Attempt to make a lower *piano*,

[1] See Plan at the end.

tected with brickwork; and at length, finding it impossible to get out of this stratum, they pushed a narrow passage in a horizontal direction, which is represented in Fig. 44 as H^2; but, not meeting with any kind of rock adapted for their purpose, they abandoned the design, and the few *loculi* constructed here are formed entirely of brickwork. We have already remarked how this and other similarly fruitless attempts to excavate sepulchral galleries in the pozzolana go to prove the

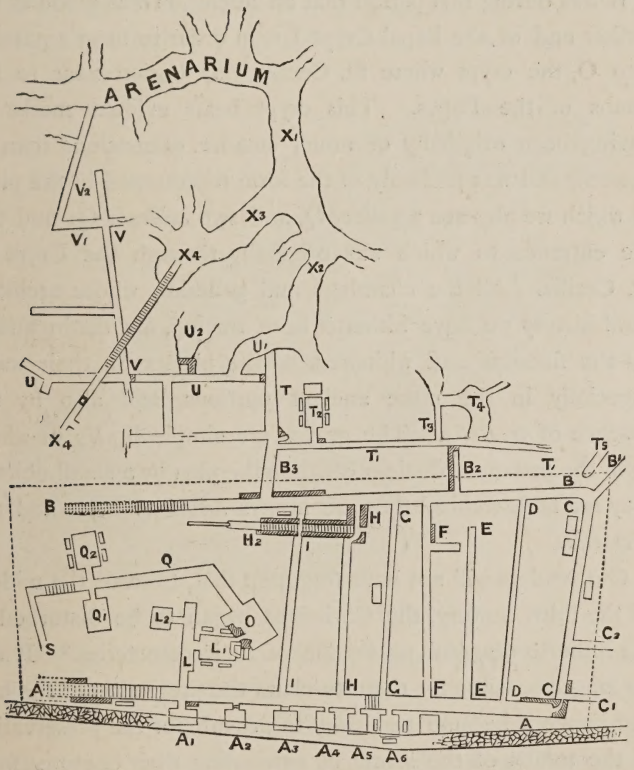


FIG. 44.—*Third Period. Connection with Arenarium.*

exclusively Christian origin of the Catacombs. The tiles used in this staircase and the galleries immediately adjacent all bear the stamp of the imperial brick-kilns of Marcus Aurelius, about A.D. 170. and must, therefore, have been made between A.D. 161 and

180. It is true that we cannot from this circumstance alone determine positively the date of the work; but it is unlikely that *all* the bricks of a building should bear the same date if the building itself had been constructed at a period far removed from the time of their manufacture. If this be admitted, we have a proof of this cemetery having been in use for a considerable time before A.D. 197, when it was committed by Pope Zephyrinus to his deacon Callixtus.

Construction of Crypt of St. Cecilia.

It was during this period that an alteration was made at the farther end of the Papal Crypt L1, in order to form a passage into O, the crypt where St. Cecilia was buried near to the tombs of the Popes. This crypt bears evident marks of having been originally of much smaller dimensions than at present, and was probably of the form represented in the plan, in which we also see a gallery Q, and two *cubicula* Q1 and Q2, the entrance to which was originally through the Crypt of St. Cecilia. All the chambers and galleries, whose architectural history we have hitherto been tracing, are distinguished by the fineness and whiteness of the plaster on their walls, especially in the more ancient portions, and also by the absence of *arcosolia.* The graves are simple *loculi;* or when, as in the instances distinguished on the plan by a small oblong, they are table-tombs,[1] they are always *loculi a mensa* and not *arcosolia.*

Necessity for concealment.

Our readers will not have forgotten that, towards the middle of the third century, the Christians began to be disturbed in the hitherto peaceful possession of their cemeteries.[2] It was no longer possible for them to claim the protection of the law, and hence it became necessary to provide for the preservation of the tombs of the saints by concealing their entrance from public view. Accordingly, they blocked up and partially destroyed the staircases A and B. The evidences of this remain in both cases, and may be recognised in the section

[1] See Figs. 6 and 7, p. 13.

[2] See pp. 150–156.

of A, Fig. 42, where, at the point numbered 11, we see the ancient staircase stop short about six feet from the floor, while the tombs, 7, 9, 10, could only have been excavated after the demolition of the staircase. The entrance B was still more completely destroyed, and a passage, B^3, was opened and supported by masonry in the outside wall of the *ambulacrum*, in order to enable the Christians to enter their cemetery through an *arenarium*, X1, X2, X3, which was situated in convenient proximity. We see from the plan that there were several entrances from the *arenarium*, some of which have

Cemetery connected with *arenarium*.

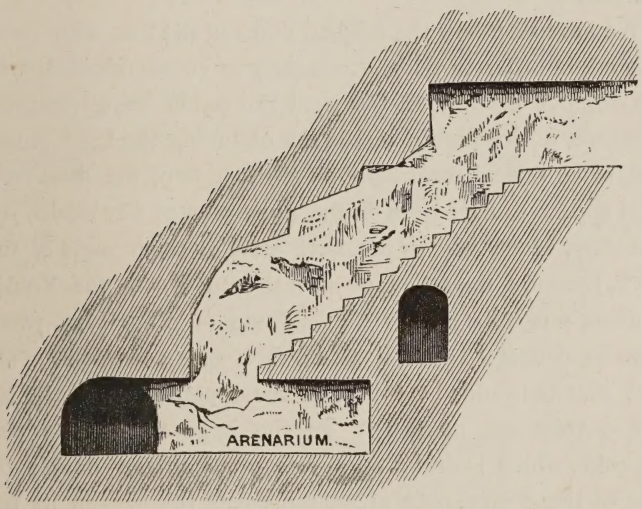


FIG. 45.—*Secret Staircase into Arenarium.*

been closed with masonry. These various passages provided means of escape even when their enemies had tracked the Christians into the Catacomb itself; and, while the satellites of the tyrant, led perhaps by some traitor, were penetrating into the cemetery by one passage, the faithful, only separated from them by a few feet of rock, might be silently passing out at another. Even when the Pagans had set guards at all the entrances into the *arenarium*, the Christians had still a way of escape through an exceedingly narrow and steep staircase,

Secret staircase.

which leads directly from the *arenarium* to the open air. This staircase, marked X4 in Fig. 44, and of which a section is given in Fig. 45, was clearly never intended to reach farther than the roof of the *arenarium*, and must have been useless either for ingress or egress, except to those who had friends below to assist them with a moveable ladder, or some other means of connecting the lowest step with the ground. In none of the galleries uniting the cemetery with the *arenarium* do we meet with *arcosolia*, the introduction of which we have already noticed as a sign of a later period than we have as yet reached.

A second *area* incorporated with the original cemetery.

We have seen how the original limits of the *area* were transgressed, in order to put the cemetery in communication with the *arenarium*. Indeed, the legal protection being removed, there was no longer any reason for observing the legal limits; and, since the adjacent *areæ* on either side of the little cross road appear to have been in the possession of Christians, this cemetery, which was, as we have seen in other parts of this work, the most important of all that belonged to the Roman Church, was enlarged by the addition of other *areæ*, which were so connected with it as to form one necropolis. The first *area* thus added was that on the opposite side of the Via Appio-Ardeatina, marked V on the large map. The plan opposite, which is drawn on a scale of $\frac{1}{500}$, being double the size of those previously given, represents this *area* in its present condition, with its dimensions determined partly by the gallery S^1, viz., 150 by 125 Roman feet. At first it was connected with our cemetery by the gallery S, but when the steps, of which traces still remain, leading from Q into the latter gallery were destroyed by subsequent works, a new entrance was effected through the chamber A^1 into *a*, which had been the main *ambulacrum* of this second *area*. The most striking peculiarity of the latter is the group of large chambers, a^2, a^3, a^4, a^5, a^6, and a^7, situated opposite to each other on either side of the *ambulacrum*. These evidently formed the earliest

Characteristics of this second *area*.

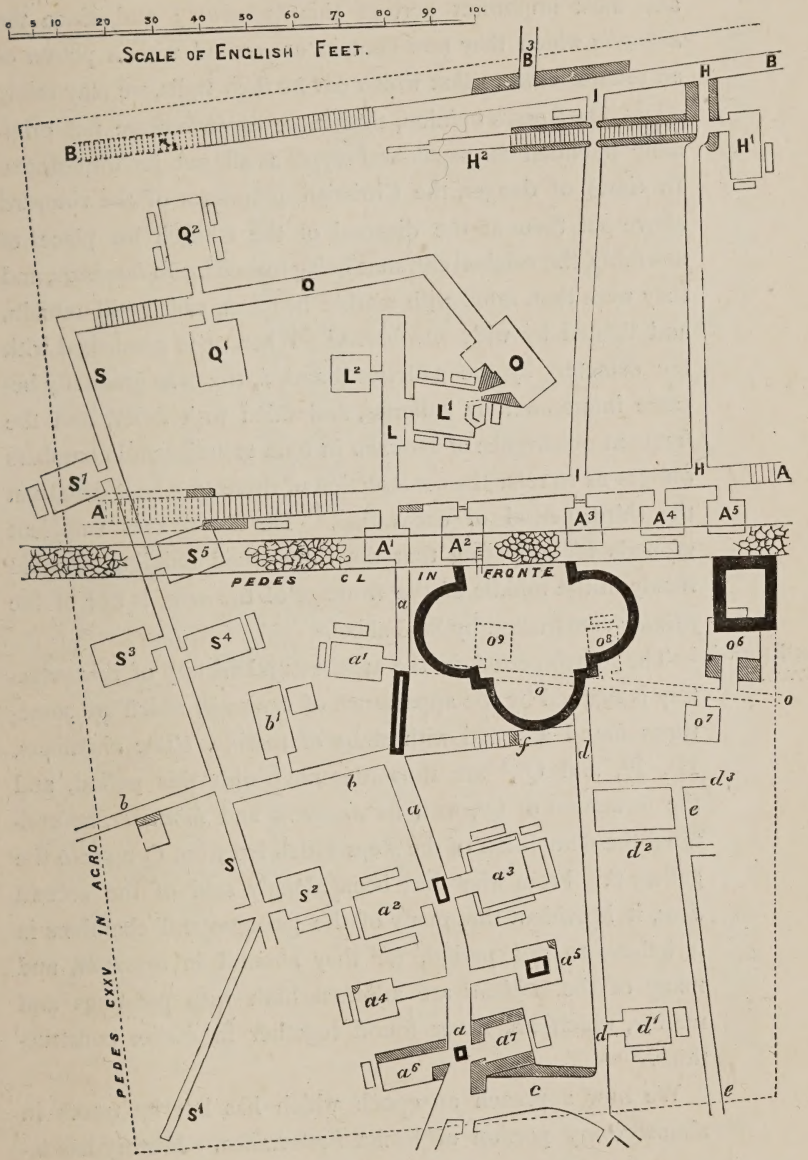


FIG. 46.—*Fourth Period. Union with a Second Area.*

N.B.—The shaded parts represent masonry below ground. The black parts represent two buildings on the Via Appia-Ardeatina, and *luminaria*. The *cubiculum* a^3 contained the Sarcophagus of St. Melchiades. For description, see Chapter III.

and most important part of this *hypogeum;* and, since the *arcosolia* which they now contain are coated with a plaster of an inferior kind to that which covers their walls, we may safely adopt De Rossi's opinion, that these *cubicula* were not originally intended for sepulchral crypts at all, but for wine-stores. In times of danger, the Christian proprietor of the vineyard above put them at the disposal of the Church for places of assembly, the original entrance being turned into a *luminare*, and they were then fitted with marble benches, which still remain, and lighted by wide *luminaria*.[1] When once connected with the cemetery by the galleries S and *b*, the *area* gradually became intersected by galleries, and filled with *loculi*, and the frequent occurrence of *arcosolia* in both galleries and chambers obliges us to refer the construction of these to a later date than the third period of excavation. De Rossi sees sufficient grounds for supposing that the three-apsed building, situated nearly in the middle of the frontage of the *area*, is one of the *fabricæ* constructed by St. Fabian.[2]

Fourth period. *Arcosolia.*

The fourth period in the architectural history of this cemetery is marked by the appearance of *arcosolia*, which are sometimes found adorned with slabs of marble. The chambers, H^1, P^1, and Q^{3},[3] are thus identified with this period, and the formation of Q^4, with its *arcosolia* and *luminare*, necessitated the demolition of the steps which led from Q up into the gallery S. From what has been already said of the second *area*, it is evident that many of the passages and chambers in it belong to this period, for they abound in *arcosolia*, and many of the *cubicula* are adorned both with paintings and marble, which are never found together in earlier constructions.

We now approach an epoch which has left its traces in almost every portion of Roma Sotterranea. History has in-

[1] See the illustration, Fig. 5, p. 12, which represents a similar arrangement.

[2] See p. 165.

[3] See Fig. 47, which illustrates the fifth period.

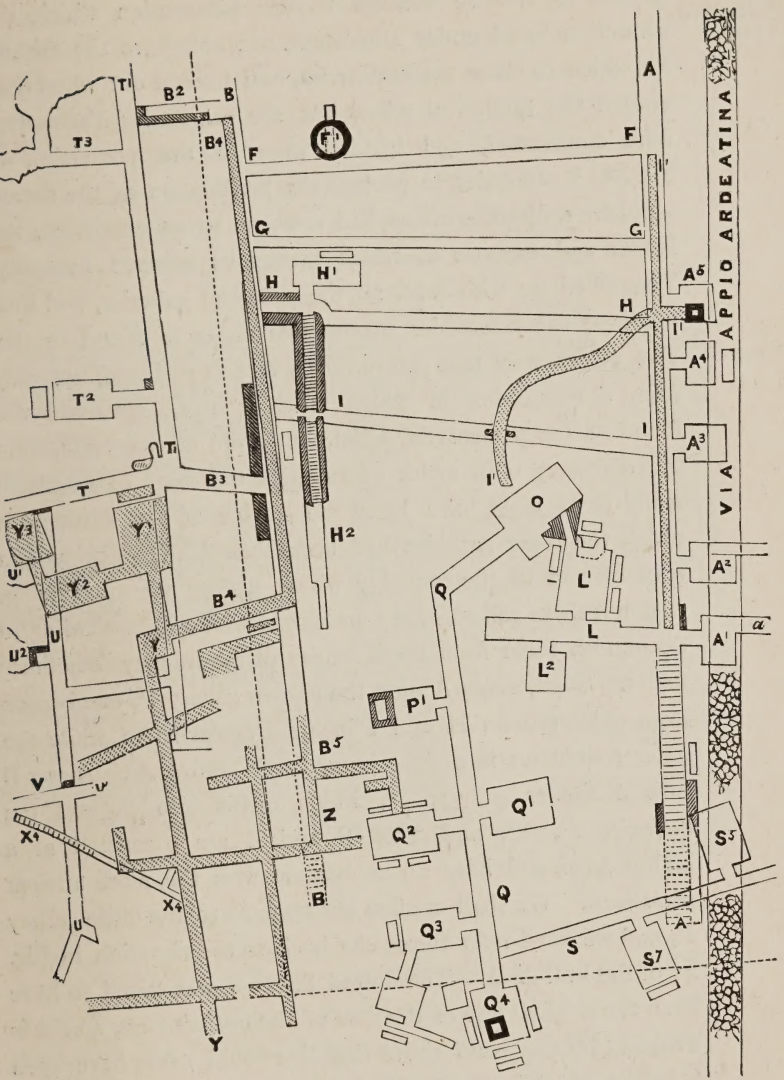


FIG. 47.—*Fifth Period. Galleries made when the ancient ones were filled with earth.*

N.B.—These galleries are distinguished by the light shading. Brickwork is denoted by darker shading. *Luminaria* by black squares. F1 is a well, which still contains water. Scale, $\frac{1}{200}$.

Fifth period. Galleries filled with earth.

formed us that in the last terrible persecution which the Church endured under Diocletian, not only were the faithful forbidden to enter the cemeteries, and hunted out when they evaded the tyrannical edict, but the cemeteries themselves were confiscated, and handed over to the possession of heathen.[1] In order to prevent the profanation of the sacred sepulchres, the Christians had recourse to an expedient, the labour and expense of which proves its extreme necessity. They filled up with earth all the principal galleries, and thus rendered the cemeteries inaccessible either to friend or foe.

Evidence of this.

The evidence of this extraordinary fact is deduced, not only from the condition in which most of the Catacombs are found at the present day,[2] but, still more convincingly, from the discovery of a series of galleries, the floor of which in many parts must have been the surface of the earth with which the older galleries had been thus filled. Fig. 47 is a plan of part of the cemetery whose history we are tracing, and in it these galleries are represented with a light shading to distinguish them from those whose direction they sometimes follow. Thus, along A runs the narrow gallery I^1, one branch from which crosses H and I in an irregular curve, while the other terminates in a shaft immediately above A^5. Along B runs a similar gallery, B^4, which opens into Y, and the *cubicula*, Y^1, Y^2, and Y^3. B^5 and Z are excavated at a higher level, and have no connection with the more ancient *ambulacra*. We shall confine our remarks to the little gallery I^1, and we must refer the reader back to the elevation in Fig. 42 of the wall of A. The dotted line, *a b*, was stated to have been the original line of the roof of the *ambulacrum*, and it is evident that the *loculi* above that line could never have been constructed while the floor of A was at its present level, or

[1] See above, p. 156.

[2] The great work of the Commission of Sacred Archæology is the removal of this earth, which, except in the important crypts cleared by St. Damasus, conceals the galleries now as effectually as in the year A.D. 303.

even at its more ancient level marked by the dotted line *c d*. Moreover, the doorway, which may be noticed above the entrance to H, shows that *a b* was the level of the floor of the gallery in whose wall that doorway was opened. This will be more clear from Fig. 48, which is a transverse section of A at the point where H falls into it. Here we can observe the difference in width between the original *ambulacrum* and the gallery I^1, cut through its roof, and now destitute of any

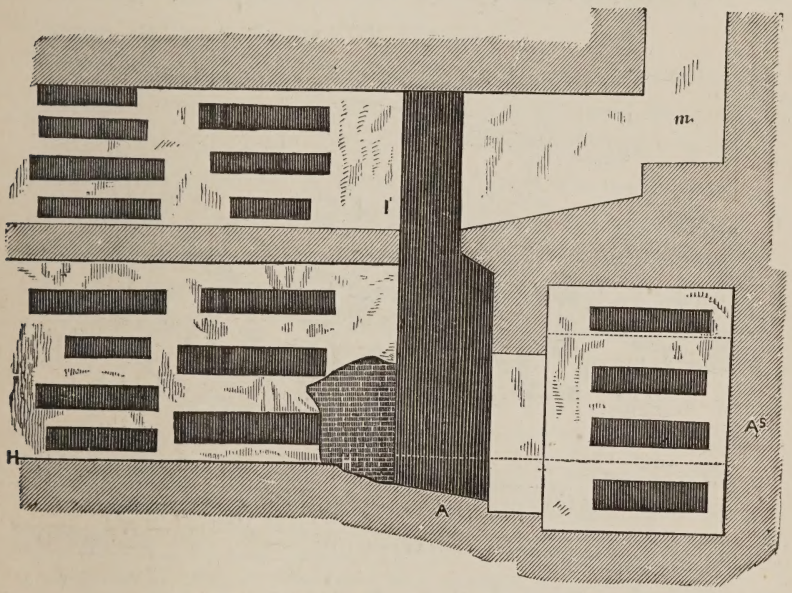


FIG. 48.—*Section of Galleries A and H, and of* I^1.

floor. The latter gallery could only have been made at a time when A was filled up with earth, and it was only by means of this artificial floor that Pomponio Leto and his companions were able to write their names on the ceiling of this narrow gallery, where they now appear twenty feet from the ground. Fig. 48 also gives us a longitudinal section of the branches of I^1, which crossed that gallery a little above the roof of H. A bridge of brickwork has recently been

thrown across the *ambulacrum* to supply the place of the earth which has been removed, but it is worthy of notice that I^1 does not break through the roof of H, nor into the chamber A^5, which it could hardly have failed to do unless those excavations had been filled with earth when I^1 was in use.[1]

This earthing-up of the galleries marks a fifth period in the history of our cemetery, to which we may, without hesitation, assign the date of the Diocletian persecution, A.D. 303.

Sixth period. A sixth period commences with the cessation of persecution,

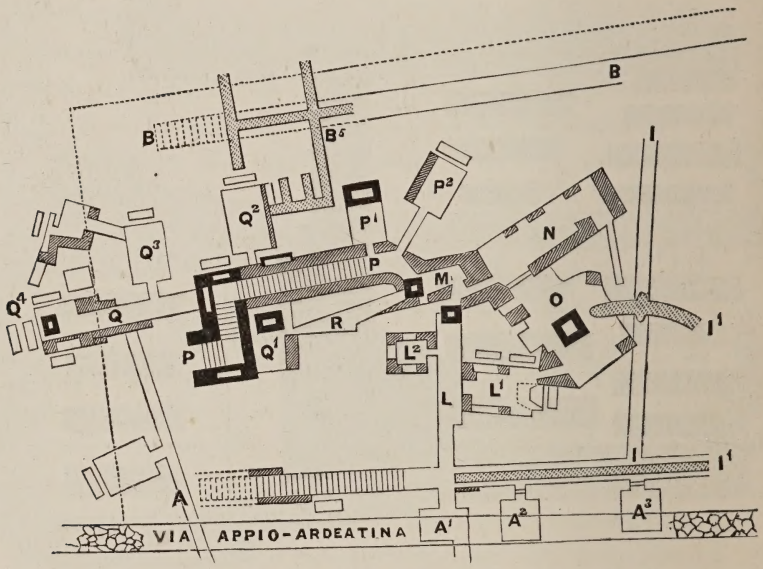


FIG. 49.—*Last Period. Works of St. Damasus.*

N.B.—The *luminaria* and masonry which reaches the surface are represented black. Subterranean masonry by dark shading. Galleries of sixth period by lighter shading.

Peace of the Church. when the faithful eagerly sought access to the tombs of the saints. The staircase A was reopened and restored, although at

[1] Fig. 48 also illustrates our remarks upon the depression of the original level of A, which is now entered from H by a sharp incline. That it was not lowered, however, so much as had been anticipated, appears from the floor of A^5 being considerably below the present level of A, from which it is entered by steps.

a somewhat higher level, shown by the dotted lines in Fig. 49, and thus an entrance was effected into the crypts of the Popes and of St. Cecilia. The earth, however, was not removed from other less remarkable portions of the cemetery, and hence it became possible to excavate the little galleries just described. An inscription in one of them bears the date A.D. 321; the shafts (as *m* in Fig. 48) for extracting the earth prove them to have been made in a time of peace, while the inscriptions and other characteristics show them to have belonged to a period anterior to the age of St. Damasus. Excavation of small galleries.

The last epoch in the architectural development of the subterranean cemeteries is marked by the extensive alterations of the indefatigable Pope Damasus. The restored staircase A proved insufficient for the crowd of pilgrims who came from all parts of the world to satisfy their devotion at the tombs of the martyrs. St. Damasus therefore constructed the staircase by which we now descend directly to the crypts of the Popes and St. Cecilia. It is marked P in the accompanying plan, from which it will be seen that it occupies a large portion of the gallery Q. In fact, the brickwork which sustains it blocked up some of the *cubicula*, and reduced the dimensions of others. The raising of the floor and ceiling of the chamber A^1, and the passage through it into the second *area*, probably belongs to this period; and also the chamber P^2, and the vestibule M, with its *luminare*, and passage R, leading to Q^1, of which the former entrance had been stopped up. The enlargement of the Crypt of St. Cecilia and its *luminare*, and the adornment and lighting of the Papal Crypt, which could not be enlarged without "disturbing the ashes of the saints," were certainly carried out under the special direction of St. Damasus. Last Period. Works of St. Damasus.

We have hitherto confined our attention to the successive developments of this one *area*, and, therefore, have not alluded to a third *area*, intimately connected with the second one, and Other *area*.

of exactly the same dimensions. In a succeeding chapter we shall describe the third *area*, and also the Cemetery of St. Soteris, with which it is connected, and then we shall proceed to examine the other divisions into which the great necropolis of St. Callixtus was once parcelled out, and which became afterwards united together by the vast irregular labyrinth of galleries which extend over the whole necropolis. For the present, it will be more to the purpose to sum up the results obtained by our detailed account of the various changes effected in the *area prima* of the great cemetery.

Application to Catacombs generally.

We must again repeat that we by no means venture to affirm that the successive architectural changes which we have traced in the Catacomb of St. Callixtus are to be found in all the subterranean Christian cemeteries of Rome. No doubt each of these had its own characteristics, and possibly its own architect; but yet we are quite justified in supposing that the cemetery which we have examined, placed at so early a period under the immediate care of the Pope, and committed by him to the Archdeacon of Rome, must have furnished a pattern, followed with more or less exactness by those who had the charge of less important cemeteries. We may, therefore, sum up the testimony of the Catacombs as to their successive development in the following general remarks.

Summary of the process of the gradual development of a Catacomb from its commencement,

When the Roman Christians of the apostolic age commenced the excavation of subterranean cemeteries, the work was comparatively new. It was carried on in a rock the consistency of which was unknown, within the narrow limits of a legal *area*, and for the use of a people as yet few in number. Consequently they did not think of constructing spacious chambers with ceilings of perilous dimensions, neither did they contemplate the construction of more than one *piano*, nor, again, did the necessity of economising space lead them to excavate galleries dangerously near to each other. Hence the most ancient part of a Catacomb is found to consist of a

gallery extending as far as the limits of the *area* permitted. Small *cubicula* were then constructed as circumstances might render necessary, with entrances from this gallery; and when this single gallery became insufficient for the wants of the community, other galleries and *cubicula* were excavated at considerable intervals from each other.

through the modifications necessary to obtain increased accommodation,

As time went on, certain further modifications became necessary. The galleries having been increased in length and number, the necessity of great economy of space was forced upon the attention of those who had the charge of the cemeteries, and the experience which had been gained by the *fossors* of the consistency of the rock enabled them to practise this economy in various ways. Thus we find more *cubicula* on either side of the galleries, and these latter are made more lofty by lowering the floor, so as to receive many more tiers of *loculi;* while, in new excavations made during this period, space was economised by the galleries being made narrower than before. The *loculi* themselves were made smaller, and space was saved by their being formed wide at the shoulders and narrow at the feet. The *fossors* also found it practicable to cut galleries with a comparatively thin wall of rock between them; and at the angles of their intersection, where the friability of the *tufa* would not admit of full-sized *loculi* being cut, these portions were turned to account by being made to receive the bodies of infants. Even these expedients failing at length to supply sufficient space, the *fossors* conceived the idea of excavating another *piano* either above or below the first. The decorations of this period also show that the *fossors* had become more accustomed to the material in which they were working. The most ancient ornamentation had been formed entirely of stucco and brickwork, but now we find cornices, columns, pilasters, brackets, and even chairs, cut out of the solid rock. The shape of the *loculi* was in time diversified by the introduction of the *arcosolium,* and the

chambers themselves varied in many instances from their former rectangular shape, and are found of an hexagonal or octagonal figure, and sometimes with *apses* at one or more of the sides.

or to avoid the search of persecutors,

A later period shows signs of the protection of the laws having been removed, and the cemeteries no longer manifest the same careful observance of the limits of the geometrical *area.* The shafts communicating with the open air, constructed during this period, are not square apertures for conveying light and air into the *cubicula*, but are round pits, generally situated just above the crossing of the galleries, and were evidently made primarily for the removal of earth. The *fossors*, no longer confined within certain prescribed limits, constructed at this period very large crypts and wide *arcosolia;* and, at the same time, to satisfy the requirements of an increasingly large Christian population, we find a multitude of poor miserable galleries full of *loculi*, but destitute of all ornament. It is also during this period that we meet with studied contrivances for concealment from persecution. The regular staircases were demolished, and instead of them were constructed secret passages leading into caves and sandpits. As a last resource, many of the galleries were filled with earth in order more effectually to conceal the tombs of the saints, and preserve them from the profane insults of the Pagan occupiers of the confiscated cemeteries. Finally, in this period we notice indications of the gradual abandonment of the practice of subterranean interment. Many of the galleries terminate in portions which contain no *loculi*, or in which the *loculi* are marked in outline on the wall, but have never been excavated; and even in some of the spacious crypts we find the spaces for *arcosolia* sketched out, but the *arcosolia* themselves have not been made. Such is in brief the general account of the construction and development of a Catacomb. The extent to which it will be found applicable to any particular instance will depend upon the period at

until its abandonment as a burial-place.

which the cemetery in question began to be made. In the more modern cemeteries fewer changes will have taken place, while in the more celebrated historical crypts more striking characteristics are to be discerned. The *area* of St. Lucina, to be described in the following chapter, will supply us with a variety of examples.

CHAPTER III.

THE VARIOUS AREAS OF THE NECROPOLIS OF ST. CALLIXTUS.

Second *area*. Area V.

IN the preceding chapter we have traced the development of the most important *area* of the great necropolis of St. Callixtus, that from which the whole catacomb derives its name. But we have already seen that at a certain period, which we have called the fourth period of its construction, a second *area* was connected with it. We have noticed some of the characteristics of this *area*,—its groups of double chambers, originally intended for wine stores, and afterwards converted into places of Christian assembly. Its plan is given at p. 407, and is numbered V. in the large map. The three-apsed chapel of SS. Sixtus and Cecilia and the square tower near it have been already described. A long *luminare* may be seen in the plan. Here are still to be seen traces of the staircase by which this *area* was originally entered. The wide though irregular gallery *a* anciently terminated at *c*, where it now breaks through *loculi* and trangresses the limits of the *area*. In its walls are several *arcosolia*, some of which are adorned with frescoes, and on the right and left are the entrances to *cubicula*.

R. S., ii. 63. *Anal.*

a^2 Is a chamber containing three large *arcosolia*, formerly lined with marble, and having figures on the ceiling which represent classical personifications of the seasons, &c., without any distinctively Christian allusion, but evidently much more ancient than the *arcosolia*, and still more so than the *loculi*.

a^3 Is a large chamber whose walls were once lined with

marble, which still remains on the bench that goes round three of its sides, and also on the pavement; on that is the inscription, PAVLVS EXORCISTA DEP. MARTYRIES VI. A deep and wide recess at the end of this chamber once contained an immense sarcophagus, probably that of St. Melchiades, the cover of which, shaped like the roof of a house, still remains. Its corners are decorated with *bassi relievi* of a shepherd and sheep. The remains of frescoes on the ceiling of the chamber resemble those of a^2 in style and subject, except that here we see the Good Shepherd and the Raising of Lazarus. Both *cubicula* are well lighted by the same wide *luminare*.

The two chambers a^4, a^5 have evidently been constructed so as to avoid injury to the *arcosolia* in the preceding chambers, and are consequently of a later date to them. They have each in one corner a little *tufa* table similar to that in the Crypt of St. Cornelius. A very fine Greek inscription to Lucana has fallen through a hole in the floor of a^5 into the gallery beneath.

a^6 Is a long narrow chamber on the principal *arcosolium*, on which are two of the *graffiti* to Sophronia mentioned page 289. The opposite chamber, a^7, is almost filled up with masonry.

A gallery *b* unites *a* with S, and thus formed the original entrance into this *area* from the primary cemetery. *b* contains several large *loculi*, one of which, beyond the crossing of S, is marked in the plan as enclosed by a wall. Nearly opposite to this, and just before the gallery passes the limits of the *area*, is an *arcosolium* beautifully painted, although the *lunette* has been almost destroyed by graves. The arch has an *orante* in the centre, with Daniel and Jonas in separate compartments at either side. *b*.

De Rossi calls *c* a subterranean piazza, which originally formed the limit of the *area*, and from which branches the gallery *d*, now in a very ruined condition, but which runs parallel to *a*, and falls into *o* by a steep incline. The names of the first visitors to the Catacombs in the fifteenth century *c*, *d*.

are to be seen over the doorway of a chamber entered from *c*. There is only one *cubiculum*, d^1, entered from *d*, and this is elaborately painted. The lower portion of the walls are covered with trellis-work, and above are panels with fruit and *putti* alternately. The ceiling is adorned with peacocks and other birds, and in the centre is a mask of Oceanus. In the *luminare* is the bust of a man holding a book, with his name in white letters below, but too much ruined to be legible. The face appears originally to have been painted on canvas, which has been removed, so that now we only have the faint outline of his features. Above it are the letters (*p*)IISIM(*us*). This chamber was originally designed for a single *arcosolium*, decorated with frescoes, with a figure of the Good Shepherd above it, now all but gone. The *arcosolium* has been destroyed by an entrance having been forced through it into gallery *e*, which with the cross galleries d^2, d^3, are not yet excavated. A small gallery *f*, with large *loculi* in it, branches off from *a* and leads to a narrow staircase by which the lower *piano* of the catacomb may be reached. The gallery *o* and its *cubicula* will be best described in connection with Area VI.

A third *area*. Area VI.
R.S., ii. 68.
Anal. iii. 80, 102.

On the same side of the ancient roadway with Area V., and of exactly similar dimensions, is a third *area*, marked VI. in the large map. A spacious staircase, with some inscriptions of the end of the fourth century, leads down from the centre of the frontage of this *area* to an *ambulacrum* extending to the right into the second *area*, and marked *o* in the plan p. 407. The character of the gallery and of the chambers, o^6, o^7, o^8, o^9, prove this *ambulacrum* to have been commenced in the third *area*, and to have been made to slope downwards, so as to communicate with the gallery *a* at a considerable time after the construction of the first chambers. The staircase itself is an enlargement of a more ancient flight of steps cut in the *tufa*, and visitors were hindered from losing their way in the labyrinth, which they would have entered had they walked straight on, by a wall, now removed, which obliged them to turn either

to the right or left. In the upper part of the staircase there is a passage into the first *piano* of the catacomb. The three first chambers to the right of the foot of the staircase are lighted by the same *luminare*, and, having been plastered all over before any *loculi* or *arcosolia* were cut in their walls, appear to have been originally intended as places of Christian assembly. Under the pavement of one of them was found a square vault containing three sarcophagi, within two of which the bodies were in a wonderful state of preservation. These sarcophagi have been covered with glass, that the bodies may be seen by visitors. A woodcut of one of them will be found in the chapter on the Sarcophagi in Vol. II.

The first chambers to the left of the staircase are of a still larger size: that immediately on the left is the Crypt (Plan VI. 9) of St. Eusebius, who was buried here by Pope Melchiades in 311, but previously to this seems to have been used for worship, and not for burial, together with the corresponding chamber (10) on the opposite side of the gallery. In the latter a large *arcosolium* was afterwards cut, and in the pavement is still an immense sepulchral slab with the inscription— *R.S.*, ii. tav. xlix. 12.

. ΚΑΤ.
ΜΑΞΙΜΑΣ. . ΤΗΣ
ΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΟΥ. ΚΑΙ.
ΘΕΟΣΕΒΟΥΣ. ΠΡΟ. Ε
(εἰδ) ΩΝΔΕΚΕΜΒΡΙΩΝ.

"The sepulchre of Maxima, the memorable and God-fearing, the fifth day before the Ides of December."

From one corner of this chamber a narrow passage leads to a third chamber (11) of late construction. If we may trust a *graffito:* ☧ *fecit Iconius adalp . . oclo diebus* X, it would seem that a *fossor* named Iconius had constructed the passage and chamber in the space of ten days. A *luminare* lights the Crypt of St. Eusebius, and another illuminates the gallery, which is lined with masonry as far as the next pair of chambers (13, 14), one of which formerly contained *R.S.*, ii. tav. xxxiii. 4.

the remains of the martyrs Calocerus and Parthenius. (See page 344.)

Passing along the gallery, we soon find it crossed at right angles by another *ambulacrum* (D, D), while there are indications in the gallery that this continuation of it was not part of the original plan. In fact, it passes at this point under the little roadway which crosses the Via Appio-Ardeatina, and divides this *area* from the Cemetery of St. Soteris. The characteristics of this third *area* are the great number of *arcosolia* not only in the chambers, but even in the galleries, and the absence of the *sepolcro a mensa*. The ceilings of the chambers are never flat, but always barrel-roofed. Two and even three chambers originally without *loculi* are often united. These indications all point to a late date, and show this *area* to have been constructed certainly after the first, and probably after the second *area* had been occupied.

Cemetery of St. Soteris.

Passing out of the third *area* by the same gallery, we enter a region of the catacomb which is itself divided into four *areas*, and which is called the Cemetery of St. Soteris. These *areas* are marked in the plan as VII., VIII., IX., X., and the galleries which divide them into these four sections bear marks of having been constructed at or near the same period as the gallery of the *area* just described. In the chambers of that gallery have been found evidences of the martyrs Calocerus and Parthenius, who suffered in 250, of Pope Caius, who died in 296, and of Pope Eusebius, who was translated hither from Sicily in 311. Two of the chambers in Area VII. contain proof that they and the *luminare* which lights them were constructed in the time of Pope Marcellinus, who succeeded Caius, and occupied St. Peter's Chair from 296 to 303, at which latter date the cemeteries were confiscated. In an adjoining chamber have been found four medals of the years 305, 306. All these dates correspond with wonderful exactness to the date of the martyrdom of St. Soteris as given in the Acts of St. Pancras, A.D. 304.

Area VII. *R.S.*, iii. 42.

The double chamber, in which were found the inscriptions of the Deacon Severus, is marked in the plan No. 3, 4, 5, 6. There are, in fact, four chambers connected together and lighted by one *luminare*. No. 5 contains the inscription of Severus; No. 4 is the additional chamber which is described by the phrase *cubiculum duplex*, while on the other side of the *ambulacrum* is the large chamber (3) called *dei cinque santi*, which contains the pictures in Plate XIV., and in which were found medals of Diocletian, Maximian, Maximin, and Constantius, who all reigned together in 305 and 306. No. 6 is lighted by the same *luminare*. Passing still farther along the *ambulacrum*, we leave on the left the triple chamber which has painted on its walls in red paint the name *Patricius;* and passing down the gallery B, in chamber 11, an inscription has been found in it with the consular date of the year 300. The chambers in this gallery appear of much the same date as those above described. Numerous *graffiti* are to be seen on the walls of the chamber called after Patricius, some of which baffle even the experienced skill of De Rossi. Here is one repeated twice in the same hand— Chamber of Severus. *R.S.*, iii. 44.

AAA VVV Q PPP

only that in the repetition there is I between the V and Q.

Continuing our way along the *ambulacrum* A, we pass two or three pairs of chambers on either side, some of which have pilasters and Corinthian capitals cut out of the *tufa*, and one of them (14) has in one corner a niche with a low seat in it. Close to the *arcosolium*, we find the gallery crossed at right angles by another, E. Taking the turn to the right, we soon find ourselves at the *arcosolium* 19, which is ornamented with paintings both within the arch, and on the wall above and around it. The tympanum of the *arcosolium* has been damaged by two *loculi* cut across it, but the arch itself contains frescoes of the Good Shepherd in the centre, with the Adoration of the Magi on one side, and the miracle of changing *R.S.*, iii. 65.

the water into wine on the other. The frescoes in front are scarcely to be distinguished, but the resurrection of Lazarus may be made out with certainty. The style is of the end of the fourth century. In the four chambers opening out of each other opposite to this *arcosolium* have been found several inscriptions, and among them one to Ulpius Florentius, aged seventy-seven; another of Aurelius Isodorus, which, Greek and Pagan in its character, bears marks of plaster on the reverse side, showing that it was brought here merely to fill up a *loculus*. The gallery E is crossed by another gallery F, which conducts us back to B, and then through C to D, which runs parallel to E. Thus the galleries E, F, C, D, H, form an irregular square, which marks the limits of the first *area* of the Cemetery of St. Soteris, intersected by the main galleries A and B, and the shorter gallery G, in which is the large double crypt, with *arcosolium* and smoke-stained niche, decorated with the paintings of the Good Shepherd, &c., in Vol. II. This subterranean chapel, with its long narrow nave, 24, and its unusual height, shows evident signs of having been used for divine worship for a considerable time; but neither this nor any of the chambers in this *area* are covered with fresco paintings like the chambers in the first *area* of St. Callixtus. Only certain *arcosolia* are decorated; the ceilings are left plain. Thus we have another sign by which we can determine the relative dates of chambers in the Catacombs. The most ancient are the richest in decoration; the later ones more plain, indicating a gradual diminution in the professors of the fine arts.

R.S., iii. 70.

Second *area* of St. Soteris. Area IX.

Let us now return to the *ambulacrum* A, and crossing E, pass into Area IX. This *area* is divided by a gallery, L, crossing A at right angles. L has along either side several *arcosolia* and three or four pairs of chambers, none of which are decorated with painting, except the *arcosolia* 28 and 34. A gallery, M, crosses L parallel to A, and marks the limits of this second *area* of St. Soteris. This *area* is in a greater state of ruin than the first. Its principal gallery, L, is characterised

R.S., iii. 82.

by the regular alternation with which the chambers and *arcosolia* succeed each other. Both the construction and inscriptions point to the same conclusion, and point to the age of Constantine as its probable date, although its general plan may have been sketched out at the same period with the first *area*. After crossing M, the *ambulacrum* A, which has continued in a straight line through four distinct *areæ*, crosses a gallery, N, and loses itself in a *cul de sac*. N runs parallel to L, and they both cut at right angles the boundary gallery M.

Third *area* of St. Soteris. Area X.

Following L, we pass into the third *area* of St. Soteris, marked X. This *area* has very marked characteristics, but it is very destitute of painting. Only one *arcosolium*, 42, is decorated. But in this *area* are formed chambers of a size larger than any that we have as yet visited, with the exception of the Crypt of St. Cecilia. These chambers are no longer always square or oblong, but are sometimes circular, sometimes hexagonal, and are frequently constructed with apsidal recesses, not only at the ends, but in some instances at each of the six sides. The ceilings, instead of being flat or barrel-roofed, are dome-shaped, and of a very considerable height. These chambers have evidently been constructed so as to serve for places of Christian assembly. The forms of these subterranean chapels may be seen on the large plan. In some of them the remains of a low bench running round the apse opposite the entrance may still be traced, although it has been removed to adapt the chamber to receive *loculi* for burial purposes. The staircase 38, which now leads from the surface to the principal *ambulacrum*, P, of this *area* is constructed of masonry, and at a date subsequent to that of the gallery at its foot. At a still later period both the staircase and the gallery have been considerably widened, evidently in order to afford more easy access for pilgrims to the Shrine of St. Soteris, whose resting-place De Rossi has identified with the apsidal chamber 39. These indications show that the original

R.S., iii. 86.

X. 39, 40, 43.

entrance to this third *area* must have been through the galleries E or L, and that its construction must have succeeded that of the first and second *areæ*. The first *area* we have seen to be of the end of the third and beginning of the fourth century, and the second of the first ten years of the fourth. This third *area* then falls within the age of Constantine; and the circular chambers, the last development of subterranean architecture, may be fairly considered as the counterpart to such buildings as the Mausoleum of St. Constantia above ground.

Fourth *area* of St. Soteris. Area VIII.

The boundary galleries D and E of the first *area* are continued parallel to each other until they are united by the gallery T, which cuts D at right angles and leads round a corner into E. T thus forms a boundary of the fourth *area* of the Cemetery of St. Soteris, marked VIII. in the plan. The little Basilica of St. Soteris is situated above this middle of the *area*, which, as yet, has been too imperfectly excavated for us to enter into any details of its characteristics or questions about its date.

Nameless *area* near St. Soteris. Area XI.

R.S., iii. 843.

To the south-west of the Cemetery of St. Soteris is a small Catacomb marked XI. in the plan, originally independent, but afterwards connected with the fourth *area* by the gallery *t*. The *arcosolia* and chambers in this *area* are covered with white plaster, but have no paintings, and the inscriptions found on a sarcophagus appear to belong to the latter half of the third century. One of the *loculi* is closed with a tile, with a stamp bearing the words: *Seculo Constantiniano provisio limena.* The *limenarcha* was the warden of the Portus Romanus.

We have now reached the limit of the great Catacomb of St. Callixtus on the western side. The ground slopes so rapidly to the west in the direction of the Via Ardeatina, that it would have been impossible for the *fossors* to have continued their subterranean galleries on their original plane. We may, therefore, in order to complete our survey of this great necropolis, return to the Via Appia, and commencing with the *area* of St.

Lucina, examine the leading characteristics of the other *areæ*, distinguished in the large plan by various colours.

In the *area* forming the Cemetery of St. Soteris we have seen but slight indications of successive modifications of the galleries and chambers. Even a minute analysis would reveal to us nothing of those changes which we have traced in the *area* of St. Cecilia and the Popes. But when we examine the *area* of St. Lucina with the aid of De Rossi's plans and sections, we see that this part of the catacomb has undergone successive changes corresponding almost precisely with those traced in the region of St. Cecilia. The plan of this Area I. in the large map will enable the reader to follow our description. We must also refer to the section of this part of the catacomb already described. The letters by which the various galleries are marked are the same in both. *Area* of St. Lucina. Area I.

From a comparison of the plan and section it will be seen that the galleries indicated by capital letters belong to stratum III., or to the second *piano* of the catacomb, while those distinguished by small letters, as *a*, *b*, *g*, *h*, &c., belong to the third *piano* in stratum V. It will be seen at a glance that this latter system of galleries is unconnected with any other part of the catacomb, and its construction enables us to determine with considerable accuracy the original limits of the *area*. The two parallel galleries *b* and *h* connected by *d*, cutting them both at right angles, determine the breadth of the original *area*, while the gallery *b* indicates the extreme length *in agro* to which the *area* extended back from the Via Appia. The gallery *g* approaches the ruined monument but does not encroach upon it, and a corresponding gallery G in the higher *piano* observes the same limit. The breadth of the original *area* is still further determined by the existence of two small Pagan tombs, one on each side of the Cemetery of Lucina. If any stronger confirmation were needed, it would be found in the fact that the limits thus determined, measured in Roman feet, give such clear round numbers as could not possibly be the result of accident. Thus, *R.-S.*, i. 70–77. *Anal.*

the breadth measures exactly 100 Roman feet,—C *Pedes in Fronte;* while the whole length extending back from the road measures 230 Roman feet,—CCXXX, *Pedes in Agro.* If we cut off from this a portion of 50 feet for the mausoleum, the rest—*area adjecta monumento*—will measure 100 feet by 180, and the

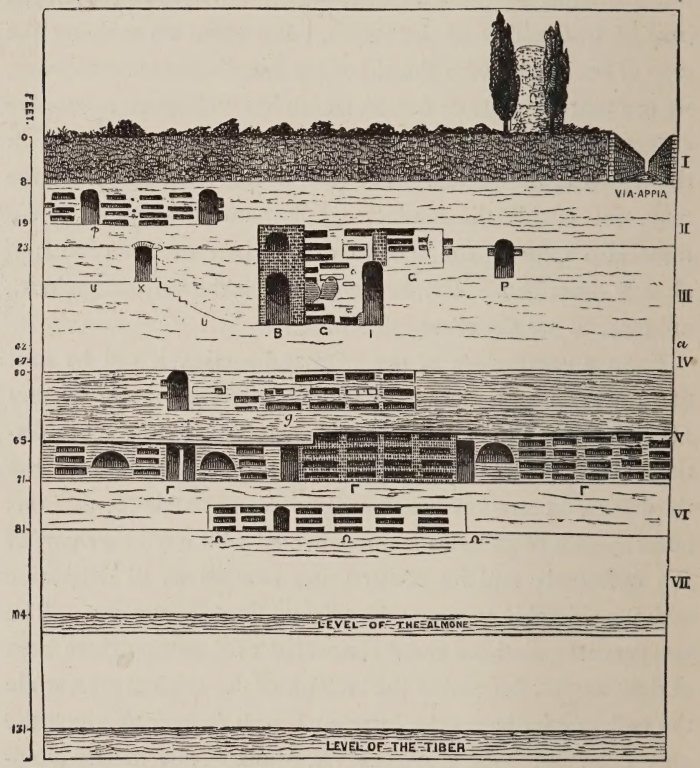


FIG. 50.—*Section of the Area of St. Lucina.*

line cutting off these 50 feet will come very near to the termination of the galleries G and *g*. The upper part of the staircase *a*, by which the lower *piano* is reached, is now extremely narrow, but its narrowness has evidently been caused by the introduction of masonry to support the higher flight of steps, A, by which the tomb of St. Cornelius is now reached. This staircase was therefore a later construction; but De Rossi has dis-

covered, in the very centre of the ancient *area*, the remains of a spacious staircase, Z, which doubtless formed the original entrance to the cemetery. The double chamber, XY, contained the frescoes which are given in Plates XII. and XVI. 1, of the Second Volume.

Successive modifications.

The paintings in these chambers and the symbols on the epitaphs of the gallery *b* alike indicate very great antiquity, while the spacious staircase tells of the period before the Christian cemeteries were interfered with by Valerian. During this early period, the line UX and G in the section, Fig. 50, marks the original level of the upper *piano*. The *sepolcro a mensa*, seen above the archway I, could not have been made after the change of the level of the floor. The same indications of change of level would be more clearly shown by a section of the gallery B and the chambers C, F, and E. The original level of the floor of C was above the ceiling of F and E, which could not, therefore, have been constructed until after the lowering of the floor had taken place. The difference between the style of the painting in the upper and lower portion of chamber C is very remarkable, the upper part being in good style and resembling the decorations of X and Y, while the lower part is of the same rude character as the painting in the barrel-roofed chamber E, which, it may be observed, transgresses the legal limits of the *area*. A glance at Plate X., which represents the present appearances of L, L, L, or the tomb of St. Cornelius, shows us many *loculi* high up in the walls and far out of reach, proving that before the burial of St. Cornelius, A.D. 253, the greater part of the galleries in this second *piano* had been considerably lowered by the cutting away of the floor, and thus providing more space for *loculi* in the walls. Part of the gallery G remains still at its original level, and is now inaccessible. After the cemeteries were invaded, the original entrance, Z, appears to have been carefully blocked up, and a narrow staircase at Q seems to have formed the entrance to the crypt, until Pope

Damasus made the staircase A leading directly to the shrine of St. Cornelius.

Unfortunately for the preservation of this most ancient and historically important portion of the catacomb, the stratum in which the third *piano* was excavated is of remarkably fine pozzolana. Modern *fossors* sank a shaft from the surface of the soil through the chamber F into the gallery beneath, and worked the pozzolana so assiduously as to ruin completely the gallery *h*, and cause the ceiling to fall in, thus destroying a great part of V and Z, and endangering the whole of the adjoining chambers X and Y. Nevertheless, the masonry built by Pope Damasus and his successors has preserved the most important part of the *area*, the tomb of St. Cornelius, which has been already fully described. It will be seen from the plan that the galleries M, I, K, Q, R, do not transgress the limits of the whole *area*, and that there is no ancient communication between the galleries of the cemetery and the adjacent tombs.[1]

The various modifications which this *area* has undergone at successive periods, as great, if not so easily defined as those in the *area* of SS. Sixtus and Cecilia, sufficiently prove its antiquity as compared with most of the other *areæ*, and harmonise exactly with the historical notices of this crypt which have been gathered from the inscriptions and from ancient documents.

Small *area* without a name. Area II.

Looking again at the large plan, we see a small *area*, marked II., situated between the *area* of Lucina and *area* V., the second *area* of the Popes. At first sight it may appear an arbitrary arrangement to cut this little square off from the galleries which cross it in all directions, but an examination of the construction justifies the plan. The remains of a demolished

R.S., iii. 313.

[1] A passage cut by modern *fossors* (marked 44 in De Rossi's plan) from the chamber b^1 in the Pagan tomb to S has led Mr. Parker into a curious mistake. He supposes this modern cutting to have been "the original entrance," and describes it with much emphasis. See *Preface to Tombs*, p. vi.

staircase are still to be seen at the point 1, and the gallery extending from this staircase is crossed at right angles by another gallery, 2. The examination of the walls show that this was the order followed by the *fossors*, who proceeded to form the third side of the square from 2 to 4, constructing the parallel gallery 3, and completing the square by the gallery 5. At the time when 5 was completed, the gallery 1 was filled up with *loculi*, and, in order to effect a junction between 5 and 1, it was found necessary to cut through some of the *loculi* at the point where the galleries meet and fill them up with masonry. The gallery 6 cuts the square in half and comes to an end before breaking into gallery 2. Afterwards, as may have been seen by the remains of the *loculi* cut through at 4, 5, the gallery 5 was carried on so as to unite this *area* with that marked XIII. It is by these indications that the original limits of this *area* are determined, and the examination of the inscriptions exactly accords with the conclusions pointed at by the construction of the galleries, and the unusually large size of the *loculi*. The epitaphs are in Greek and Latin characters in about equal proportions, and their style is of that laconic peculiarity which marks a very early period. Scarcely anything is written besides the name :—Αυξανων, Δημητριανη, Cεντια, Αγαθη, Ποταμιων, Θεοφιλος, Αυρηλια Μακεδονια, Alacrius, Dorothea, Aurelia Dionysias, &c. Only two symbols, the Dove and the Anchor, are found ; and one acclamation, EN IRENE, Greek, but in Latin characters,—all these peculiarities mark this region to have been one of the most ancient of all Christian cemeteries, and De Rossi judges that the second or the very first years of the third century is the latest date that can be assigned to it, or at least to the galleries 2, 3, and 4. The part of the gallery 5 between 4 and 6 is of the same period, but the smaller size of the *loculi* between 6 and 1 marks a later period, and the inscriptions are in the style of the third century. The only portion of this *area* which contains *cubiculi* is the gallery 6, and it alone has *arcosolia* in its walls. These are not found

before the third century, but even here there is no trace of the monogram ☧ either on stone or plaster. In the first of these chambers De Rossi found two Greek inscriptions of Pomponius Bassus, on the back of each of the two fragments of which are Latin inscriptions. This Pomponius Bassus was twice consul, in the years 258 and 270, so that these chambers cannot have been completed before the latter part of the third century.

Arenarium of St. Hippolytus. Area XIII.

Our readers will see in the plan, to the right of the Crypt of St. Lucina, the traces of an *arenarium* extending from the Via Appia as far as the *area* marked XIII. It is necessary to remember that this *arenarium* is in the pozzolana stratum, marked V. in the section, Fig. 50, and is below both the second and third *piani* of the catacomb. We have seen how in time of persecution the contiguity of an *arenarium* formed a convenient mode of entrance for the Christians when they had been compelled to close the principal staircases. We have also noticed that St. Hippolytus was buried *in arenario;* and De Rossi, who in 1868 cautiously reasoned on the probability of this Area XIII. having contained the remains of St. Hippolytus, pronounces now without hesitation that "in no other spot except in this XIII. region, can we consistently recognise the historic *arenarium Hippolyti.*" In 1868 he commenced to clear out the staircase, marked 1 and 3 in the large plan, which leads from the surface of the soil to the floor of the *arenarium.* Great difficulty was experienced in effecting this clearance, for the water had been for centuries accustomed to drain off from the two *piani* of the catacomb into this staircase, and immense quantities of rubbish had accumulated. The staircase leading from the open air to the second *piano* of the catacomb is entirely flanked with masonry strengthened with arches. One of the steps is composed of a marble inscription of the fourth century. This staircase, in all probability, was destroyed in the time of the Diocletian persecution,

R.S., iii. 218, &c.

and restored with others after the peace of the Church. A Greek inscription to Chrysantha, ΧΡΥϹΑΝΘΗ ΤΕΚΝΟΝ ΓΛΥΚΥΤΑΤΟΝ ΕΤΩΝ $\overline{\text{ΚΒ}}$ ΚΑΙ ΜΗΝΩΝ $\overline{\text{Ε}}$ ϵΠΟΙΗϹΑΝ ΓΟΝϵις καΙ ϹΥΜΒΙΟϹ, on a stone of unusual size, appears to belong to the third century. This epitaph is in a small landing-place between the second and third *piani.* Fragments of sarcophagi of the largest size were found heaped together near the bottom of the staircase, and all these signs of an historic crypt, or at least the sepulchre of some great family in the neighbourhood of this staircase. Further explorations made in 1870 proved that the second *piano* of this part of the Catacomb was considered in the fourth century as a sanctuary—*sanctorum locus.* The staircase maintains its uniform wide character throughout its entire length, from the surface to the first and second *piano*, thence again to the third *piano*, and from this last to the *arenarium*, but the friability of the rock and the accumulations of mud and rubbish make its excavation difficult and even dangerous. The walls of the lowest flight of steps are covered with white plaster adorned with painting. This exception to the rule in all other instances points to some special feature in this *arenarium.* A final attempt was made to complete these excavations in 1875, but every wet day covers over with a fresh mass of mud the excavated stairs, and a shaft of some 75 feet will have to be sunk before this staircase can be cleared out to the bottom.

R.S., iii. tav. xxx. 13.

R.S., iii 222.

The galleries connected with this staircase are of much the same character in both the second and third *piani*, as may be seen from a glance at the plan. There are only two or three chambers in the second *piano*, and none in the third. The extremely friable nature of the rock in this region is an additional reason for concluding that the *fossors* would not have attempted the construction of a cemetery here, unless the devotions of the faithful had been attracted by the vicinity of the tomb of some illustrious martyr.

The *area* marked XII. in the plan is so closely connected

The Liberian Region, Area XII.

with the *area* of Hippolytus that it might seem to be undistinguishable from it. A more careful examination, however, shows that its mode of construction is quite different. Here there are a great number of chambers, some of them of very large size, and lighted by spacious *luminaria*. In fact, the architecture of this *area* assumes a character which marks the period of the further development of the subterranean cemetery, and the dates of the inscriptions being of the latter half of the fourth century led De Rossi to assign this *area* to the pontificate of Pope Liberius.

R.S., iii. 230.

The staircase, 1, leads directly to the *ambulacrum* A, which is about 6 feet wide, the largest gallery in the whole Catacomb. To the right of the staircase a short gallery leads into a large chamber, 4. This chamber is lighted by a *luminare*, the shaft of which occupies the whole of the roof, nearly 18 feet by 17 feet square. The walls rise to a height of 30 feet, and each of the three sides has an *arcosolium* of ample dimensions, one at least of which was once screened by marble *transennæ*, of which the fragments still remain. Above each of these *arcosolia* has been excavated another *arcosolium*, like a kind of clerestory, and the spring of the arches of these higher *arcosolia* once rested upon the capitals of four marble pillars, the bases of which still remain. An irregular chamber has been appended to the crypt by a doorway cut through the *arcosolium* on the left, and the *arcosolium* on the right is adorned with diaper work, in which floriated Greek crosses form the principal feature. Boldetti's description of this large subterranean chapel when it was comparatively uninjured enables us to reconstruct its details with considerable certainty, and a fragment of the restoration of an inscription of Pope Damasus to the holy deacons Redemptus and Tigrida has been found by De Rossi, and proves that this crypt was once the shrine of those saints.

R.S., iii. 236.

The wide gallery A extends across almost the entire length of this Area XII. It is intersected in the middle by an *ambulacrum* B cutting it at right angles. Between the large crypt

4 and the intersection of B a gallery C branches off at an angle of 60° in the direction of the *arenarium* of Hippolytus, while the northern boundary is marked by the gallery D at right angles to the extremity of A. At the foot of the staircase 1, leading into A, a gallery F crosses the latter, and E with its chambers runs from D parallel to A. The usual indications by which the relative antiquity of galleries are determined show that A, B, C, D, and E were the original galleries peculiar to this region. Their characteristics are chiefly the great number of *arcosolia*, large and spacious *cubicula* similar to that of Redemptus described above, *luminaria* of unusual size. The *arcosolia* and some of the chambers have once been painted, but on such poor plaster that the colours have all but disappeared. All these characteristics indicate a comparatively late period of art. The appears painted in an *arcosolium* close to the junction of C with A. This is the first time this monogram has been seen *painted* in the Cemetery of St. Callixtus. Everything combines to fix the construction of this *area* in the latter part of the fourth century, at about the same period as Area IX., and thus De Rossi has given it the name of the Liberian region. It must once have been exceedingly rich in inscriptions, but no part of the Catacomb has suffered so much from the depredations of ancient and modern barbarians. It was visited by Pomponio Leto and other members of the Roman Academia, who left their names on its walls; and in the fifteenth century the monks of St. Sebastian used to come here, and pass by the staircase in Area XIII. into the third *piano* of this *area*. An account is given elsewhere of the valuable inscription found in this region commemorating Pope Caius.

R.S., iii. 247.

R.S., iii. 263. "Epitaphs," 57.

It may occur to some who examine the large map of the Catacomb, that the division which De Rossi has made between this Liberian region and Area XIII. is arbitrary. A careful examination of the galleries would remove this suspicion, for there is a noticeable difference of level between the two *areæ*,

Area XII. distinguished from Area XIII.

R.S., iii. 301.

that of XIII. being higher than that of XII. This difference is not so perceptible in the larger galleries, where frequent use has caused the incline to be very gradual, but it is very evident in the smaller galleries. Moreover, Area XIII. has very peculiar characteristics of its own. In all the other portions of the great necropolis the second *piano* is the most important, and contains the principal tombs and chapels. In this the third *piano* is the most distinguished part of the *area*, in consequence of its contiguity to the Shrine of St. Hippolytus.

Northern limit of St. Callixtus.

Region XV. Cemetery of St. Balbina.

The determination of the northern limit of Area XII. by the gallery D is much more obvious. The map itself shows that the galleries of the anonymous region XV. never once transgress the limits of the Liberian region, although they sometimes approach so near that only a few inches of *tufa* separate them.[1] They are also excavated at a much lower level, and some of them run beneath those of the second *piano* of Area XIII. The eastern portion of this Region XV. is now connected with Area XII. by the gallery D; but that gallery could only be extended beyond the limits indicated by De Rossi by breaking through *loculi*. In fact, there is still to be seen a narrow staircase leading down to the *arenarium* beneath D; and it appears that it was only when the *fossors* found this mode of enlarging the cemetery impracticable, that they resolved to continue the gallery D by filling up the staircase and breaking through the *loculi* into the triangular region which had already become connected with the Cemetery of St. Soteris by the *ambulacrum* L L. The Region XV., so rigidly cut off from the great necropolis of St. Callixtus, evidently belonged to a different administration, and was probably connected with the Cemetery of

R.S., iii. 339.

[1] That this separation was not the result of any hostility between the proprietors of the respective regions, is proved not only by the way in which the galleries and *cubicula* dovetail into each other, but by the curious fact of some one having stamped several times on the wet plaster a seal bearing the words SPE I in each region, the same seal having been used in both cases, and NDEO the possessor having been free to enter either cemetery.

Balbina, placed by Pope Marcus, in the middle of the fourth century, under the parochial management of the priest of the Church of St. Balbina near the Porta Capena.

Connecting galleries between Areæ IX. and XII.

The galleries in the region between Areæ VII. and IX. and the Liberian region are almost without any inscription or monument of any kind. They appear to have been in the first instance pushed forward from the Cemetery of St. Soteris, and the only painted *arcosolium*, 19, belongs to the same family with the frescoes in that cemetery, and has no resemblances to the decorations of the Liberian region. The chambers 17 and 18, on the contrary, resemble those of Area XII., and confirm the evidence of the galleries that this part of L had its origin in the Liberian region. Thus the former portion of this triangle appears to belong to the first half of the fourth century, while the latter portion may be safely assigned to the last years of that century, if not to the first years of the fifth.

R. S., iii. 342.

The labyrinth or Region XIV.

We have already described the north-western, south-western, and western limits of the necropolis of St. Callixtus. It remains for us to treat of that irregular portion of the Catacomb which lies to the south-east, between the Crypt of Lucina and the *area prima* of St. Callixtus, in the angle formed by the branch road with the Via Appia. This region, marked XIV. in the map, consists merely of sepulchral galleries, not only crossing each other in a confused labyrinth, but not even preserving the same horizontal level, so that first and second *piani* are inextricably mingled together. The galleries are low and narrow, there are no chambers or crypts, not a single *arcosolium*, nor a trace of painting. No order nor sign of any preconceived plan of construction can be discovered, and yet this labyrinth has its own staircase, and its galleries seem to have avoided at first any transgression of the limits of the adjacent *areæ*. Afterwards, those limits are found to be no longer respected, and the first *piano* of this region appears to have been the original nucleus of that irregular web of galleries which appear in the plan spreading over the whole necropolis, utterly regardless of any

R. S., iii. 377.

law or limit. From the points of contact between this labyrinth and the second *area* of St. Callixtus it is evident that that *area* was already occupied when the labyrinth was formed. It is also equally evident that no connection existed between the first and second *piano* in that same *area*, and the first *piano* could only be entered by the staircase of the labyrinth. This proves that the first *piano* of the labyrinth was of more modern date than the first. In the third *area* of St. Callixtus, Area VI. in the map, there are two distinct groups of galleries on the first *piano*. There are those whose principal gallery runs parallel to the cross road, which is constructed on the normal plan of straight corridors with chambers on either side and *arcosolia;* and there is a portion of this labyrinthine network irregular, and destitute of chambers or *arcosolia*. These have no connection with each other, but the former group is connected with the chief staircase of the *area*, while the latter is connected with the labyrinth and its staircase in Area XIV. We have said that the labyrinth was destitute of chambers, but there is one exception. In the course of some 2600 feet of gallery, excavated in this labyrinth, one miserable little *cubiculum* has been found, the smallest and poorest in all the necropolis; while in the 160 feet of the first *piano* gallery in Area VI. no less than eight well-proportioned chambers have been brought to light.

The second *piano* of the labyrinth.

The labyrinth, though deprived of chambers and *arcosolia*, is full of *loculi*, and by no means poor in inscriptions. Those in the second *piano* have all the characteristics of the middle of the fourth century. Very few of them are in Greek; many have the dove and palm-branch; one has the consular date of 358, and another has the date of 358 indicated by the expression, *Deposita in pace sub Liberio.*[1] De Rossi gives a particular account of all the inscriptions found in the various galleries of this *piano*, and sums up the result as follows: "The epigraphy here is almost all Latin; the salutation *in pace* is constantly met

[1] See Epitaphs, p. 115.

with without any additional acclamation; the phrase *depositus*, *depositio*, *defossio*, prevails, even summarised in the formula D P, without any mixture of *decessit*, *reddidit*, *dormit*, or other words anciently used to indicate death; there is not a single mention of the *gens* of the deceased; no vestige of the anchor or fish or other antique symbols; a few examples of the are scattered throughout the whole labyrinth, and there is only one instance of the A Ω, two of the monogrammatic cross, and one of the equilateral cross. These are the characteristic marks, now many times formularised by me, of the sepulchral epigraphy of about the middle of the fourth century; an epoch exactly corresponding with the architectural and topographical dates above mentioned, and to which the seal is set by the historical mention of the pontificate of Liberius in the principal staircase A."[1] We may therefore safely assign to this second *piano* a date similar to that of the Liberian region, Area XII.

The first *piano* of the labyrinth.

It is more difficult to assign a date to the vast labyrinth which springs from the first *piano*, and spreads its network over the greater part of the necropolis. De Rossi calls the chapter in which he traces the various groups of this network, and notices the inscriptions and *graffiti* found in it, a "long and dry chapter." Among the inscriptions has been found one with the consular date of 407 upon it. This was in the gallery which stretches furthest towards the south from the staircase A, and is really mid-way between the first and second *piano*, and bears marks of being the latest portion which was used for burial. The simple Latin cross appears in another inscription bearing the name of Honorius, and the square form of the Greek O is found on one *loculus*. This is unique in Rome, but in other Italian cities it is found only in inscriptions of the fifth century. The general character of the inscriptions marks a period varying from the middle of the fourth century to the

R.S., iii. 383

PRICIPIA
IN PACE
HONORIO VII C

[1] R. S. iii. 376.

first ten years of the fifth. This period coincides with that more or less obscurely indicated by the irregular way in which these galleries have been constructed.

Conclusion. We have gone through the whole of the various *areæ* into which the great Catacomb of St. Callixtus was originally divided. We have endeavoured to trace back each *area* to its origin, and to discover as far as possible the dates of the successive developments of each separate portion, and to trace the process by which they gradually became connected with each other, until by the all-pervading network of the labyrinth they were all united in one vast necropolis. We have also ascertained as far as possible the boundaries of the necropolis, on the east by the Via Appia, on the west by the slope of the hill preventing the continuation of the galleries, on the north by the close proximity of another cemetery ecclesiastically distinct from this of St. Callixtus, and on the south by the abandonment of subterranean interment. It is true that we have but superficially treated these subjects. Those who require a really exhaustive account of the matter must have recourse to the volumes of De Rossi, where they will find every point fully and satisfactorily proved. We have, however, thought fit to give our readers a specimen of the careful analysis upon which all these conclusions are based, by devoting the following chapter to an examination in detail of the various portions of the *area prima* of the cemetery under consideration, abridged from the analysis of Michele De Rossi in the second volume of "Roma Sotterranea."

CHAPTER IV.

ANALYTICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AREA OF THE CEMETERY OF ST. CALLIXTUS.

N.B.—*The reader should open the plan while studying this chapter, and should refer also to the elevation in Fig.* 42, *p.* 400.

Area III. Staircase A.

THE staircase which originally formed the entrance to the principal gallery of this *area* was thoroughly and minutely examined by the brothers De Rossi in May 1865. The inclination of the steps enabled them to determine with accuracy the upper portion of the flight, of which nothing now remains, but the original position of which is indicated by the dotted lines. The first remains appear about ten feet below the surface of the soil, and extend to a depth of about thirty-nine feet underground. The plan indicates a wall of brickwork and *tufa* on each side of the staircase for a short distance, but the greater part of the length is excavated out of the living rock. As we have before remarked, there are evidences of two flights of stairs constructed at different periods. The original flight had steps covered with slabs of marble, and walls coated with very fine stucco, and adorned with narrow bands of a bright red colour. This flight of steps, however, bears signs of having been demolished and interrupted in many portions of its length; and hence another flight was constructed on foundations composed of masonry resting on such of the original stairs as remained entire. This flight of stairs is indicated by the dotted line in Fig. 42, to which we must refer our readers, as well as to the plan at the end of this analysis. The numbers and letters are alike in both, being those used by De Rossi.

R.S., ii. *Anal.*, 87, &c.

A 2. Wall resting on a step of the earlier staircase.

A 3. Similar construction on three steps.

A 4 About half-way down the stairs, on the left, we find a large *sepolcro a mensa* divided so as to contain three bodies. It is shaped like that of St. Cornelius, and lined with white stucco, but the filling up of the niche above the *mensa* is of rough masonry covered with coarse plaster, as also are the materials used to stop the *loculi* which are on either side of the staircase. These are, therefore, of later construction than the original *ambulacrum* to which the steps lead.

A 7. Three or four *loculi* have been cut in the staircase itself, evidently between the period of its demolition and that of the

A 9. construction of the later staircase upon its ruins. And near its lower extremity two large sepulchres have been constructed, each between four and five feet in depth, and so wide as to appear like small galleries passing beneath the staircase. In the sides of one of these sepulchres are three *loculi* closed in the usual manner, while the other is so divided as to contain

A 10. nine bodies each in a separate niche. The mouths of these sepulchres are covered with tiles placed roof-wise, so as to bear the weight of the staircase afterwards built over them. The

A 11. last few steps of the original flight, indicated by dotted lines, have been entirely destroyed, evidently with the design of not leaving even the least remains of them on the side walls, so that any one attempting to enter the cemetery would have had to make a leap of some five feet in order to reach the floor of the *ambulacrum.* In the vertical wall thus left a sepulchre for several bodies was afterwards found, the ruins of which still remain.

A 13. The second staircase is about thirty-three inches above the first, and this difference in level necessitated the construction of a flight of steps in order to reach the *cubiculum* A_1 on the right, and likewise to enter the gallery L on the left.

Ambulacrum. The *ambulacrum* which we have now entered was cleared

A. of earth at the beginning of 1856, but it had been visited by Boldetti and other explorers, who have left memorials of their visits in the galleries leading out of it. As we pass along

A 16. between chambers A_2 and A_3 we notice that the walls are much ruined, almost up to the roof; but that immediately

under this they are in good preservation for the space of two *loculi*, and that here they do not spring from the same base-line as do the lower portions of the wall. The *loculi* of this higher portion are smaller than those at a lower level, and both the roof and walls are plastered and ornamented with paintings, which cannot be distinguished when we stand on the ground. This upper portion, of which a section is given on page 411, must therefore have been excavated when the whole of the lower part of the *ambulacrum* was filled with earth, and this earth, which formed the floor of the small gallery above, enabled the companions of Pomponio Leto to write their names, *Parthenius* and *Gallus*, on the roof of the gallery. Its roof.

Turning our attention from the roof of the gallery to its floor, we observe that we have to ascend two steps in order to enter the chamber A_2, and at the door of chamber A_3 a similar ascent indicates a corresponding depression of the level of the floor. Its floor. On the opposite side of the gallery the same peculiarity strikes us even more forcibly, for while the roof of the gallery I is horizontal throughout, the floor, for about half its length, rises gradually from the point where it meets the *ambulacrum* A. When, however, we reach the door of chamber A_4, we find the floor of this chamber at the same level with the *ambulacrum*, showing that this chamber was constructed subsequent to the depression of level. At the entrance to the gallery H, the level of which is about two feet higher than that of A, there are to be seen traces of two steps, which have now become worn into an inclined plane. The difference of level is shown in the section on page 411, which proves that H must have been formed before the floor of A was lowered. Almost opposite to H is the entrance to the chamber A_5, which is entered by descending two steps, as may be seen in the above-mentioned section. This *cubiculum*, therefore, was constructed after the floor of the *ambulacrum* had been lowered, and in anticipation of a more considerable depression than was actually carried into effect. The same section shows the narrow gallery above the *ambulacrum* A, and the traces of the original roof of that *ambulacrum*. It also represents a portion of the small gallery I_1, the shaft for removing the earth from which falls exactly on a line with the wall of

A 17.

A 18.

A 19.

the chamber A_5. The modern bridge, which now crosses the *ambulacrum* A, had no counterpart in the ancient remains, and was only constructed by the Commission of Sacred Archæology to enable the gallery I_1 to be traversed, now that the earth which formed its floor has been removed from the galleries A and H.

A 20. We next descend five steps, now worn into an inclined plane (see page 400), and reach the entrance to the gallery G, which is formed at the lower level of A, and the way into which would not have been practicable when the floor of the latter was first made. This opening, therefore, of the gallery G was constructed after the level of A had been lowered. Nearly opposite to G is the entrance to the *cubiculum* A_6, the floor of which is very slightly below that of the *ambulacrum*, of which we have reached the lowest portion, so that here we see the design carried into effect, which the lower level of A_5 has shown us had been intended also there, but not carried out. The state of the walls of the *ambulacrum* is so ruinous in this part as to have required them to be sustained by modern masonry. The entrance to the gallery F was first opened at the higher level, and then lowered to the new level, as appears from its great height, and also from the *tufa* not having been entirely cut away from the lower portion of its walls. Close

A 23. beside A_6 is a large sepulchre A 23, marked in the plan, resembling a *sepolcro a mensa*, except that it is too near the ground, and seems to have been closed like a simple *loculus*. The entrance to the gallery E must evidently have been constructed after the depression of the floor of A; while D, like F, bears evident signs of having been cut away to meet the lower level after its original construction. As we approach

A 26. the corner A C, the left wall is observed to be strengthened for a considerable portion of its height by constructions of *tufa* and brickwork, while the corner itself is entirely filled

A 27. up with a solid pillar of the same materials, having merely a narrow passage through it, along which only one person could pass at a time. Along the whole length of A, numerous inscriptions have been found in fragments which have fallen from the *loculi*, and they are for the most part in the Greek language.

Returning again to the foot of the staircase, we enter the *cubiculum* A_1, the original floor of which was thirty-three inches lower than it is at present; and from the line where the fine white stucco, with red lines upon it, now ends, we are able to determine the corresponding elevation of the roof. The left wall of the original chamber is entirely gone, and was removed in order to enlarge the chamber, and to make room for the entrance through it into the second and third *areæ* of

Cubiculum A_1.

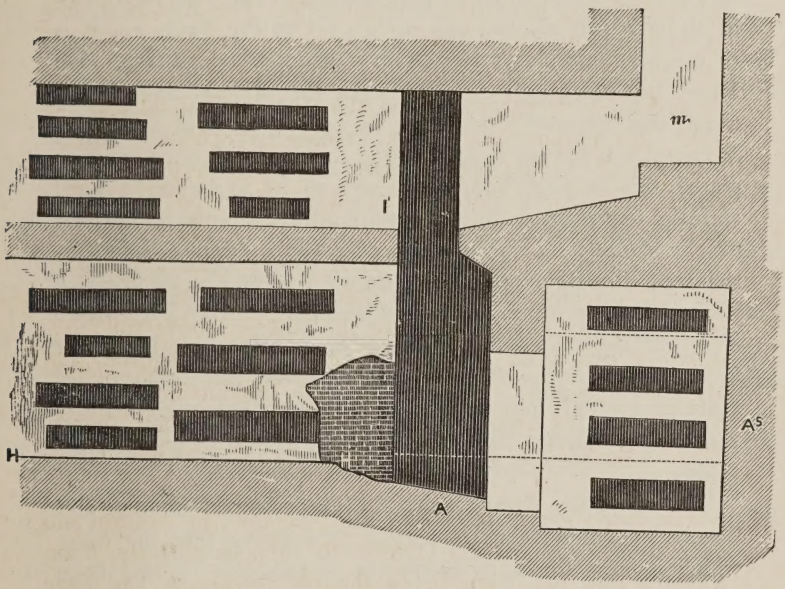


FIG. 51.—*Section of Galleries A and H, and of I*[1].

the necropolis, which, being at a higher level, required the elevation of the floor of this chamber. Both the door and *loculi* are quite in ruins.

A_2 is approached by two steps, and is lined with stucco, on which are painted the frescoes in Plates XV. 1, XVI. 2. An examination of the stucco at the lower part of the walls shows that the original floor must have been lowered about eight inches. Near the door on the right hand is a square pedestal or seat made of *tufa*, and covered with a slab of terra-cotta, and to the left is a little staircase leading to a higher *piano* of

Cubiculum A_2.

the cemetery, but evidently much more modern than the chamber.

Cubiculum A_3. The chamber A_3 is square like the last, and similarly decorated. The floor is about eleven inches above the level of the *ambulacrum*. This chamber is called by the guides the *Capella dei Sacramenti* from the symbolical paintings on the walls.

Cubiculum A_4. The succeeding chamber, A_4, is decorated in the same way, but the stucco is of an inferior quality. The roof is so low as to be hardly six feet two inches above the floor, which is of coloured marbles arranged in a geometrical pattern. De Rossi has, however, ascertained that the original floor is beneath this pavement, and that, in consequence of the *ambulacrum* A not having been lowered to the depth once contemplated, this original floor was raised so as to be on a level with the *ambulacrum*, thus accounting for the unusual lowness of the ceiling. This as well as A_3 has a *loculo a mensa* in the wall directly opposite the door; the side walls are also pierced by two *loculi*, one above the other. Above the *loculo a mensa* two *loculi* for children have been irregularly cut at a later period. The explorers of the fifteenth century had penetrated into this chamber, and left their names, *Parthenius*, *Gallus*, *Matthias*, *Thomas*, which are now barely visible.

Cubiculum A_5. The *cubiculum* A_5 resembles the preceding in its form and decorations, and there is reason to suppose that the floor, which is now two steps below the *ambulacrum* A, had been raised like that of the chamber A_4, since the original ceiling has been removed, and a new one made at a sufficient elevation to admit of an additional range of *loculi* all round the chamber. This latter portion is covered with a inferior very kind of plaster, and has a barrel-roof, instead of the flat or cruciform vaulting found in all the preceding *cubicula*.

Cubiculum A_6. A_6 resembles the other chambers in form and decoration, but on either side the lower tomb is a *loculo a mensa*, with the sepulchre lined with marble and forming a *bisomum*, although in each case they have been closed like a common *loculus*. The end of the chamber, however, is entirely occupied with

one large *sepolcro a mensa* divided for two bodies, each division being lined with marble. The iron bars which supported the *mensa* are still to be seen. At a later period it became necessary to strengthen this wall with masonry, and to this period must be assigned the two marble pilasters which now stand on either side of the sepulchre, and the vertical slab of Grecian marble which once covered the whole space between these pilasters. The marble pavement still remains upon the floor. *R.S.*, ii. tav. xxxv. 7. Within this chamber was found the epitaph—

SERGIVS ALEXANDI
CAECILIE FAVSTAE
COIVGISVEBENE
MERIENTI FECIT

The staircase and *ambulacrum* B is parallel to A, and very wide and lofty, but it has suffered not only from the changes made in ancient times, but from the carelessness with which the possessors of this property in the last century adapted it for the purposes of a wine-store. Both tombs and walls were recklessly destroyed to make receptacles for the butts of wine, and the gallery was entered from a modern staircase made beneath the three-apsed chapel of St. Sixtus above the second *area*. This staircase has now been blocked up, and the point where the ancient steps must have reached the surface of the soil is marked in the plan by the dotted lines. Staircase B.

A wall (29) closes up the staircase at about half its length. From this point the upper portion of the staircase was deprived of half its width in order to make a space for the narrow flight of steps B_5, which lead down to the galleries Z and Y. Near this wall the staircase B retains traces of the same fine stucco, with its ornament of thin red lines which we observed on the walls of A. Almost immediately below this wall the steps have been demolished, as we observed had been done in the case of the parallel flight, and evidently at the same period; the traces of them, however, remain on the side walls. Here was found the remains of a small sarcophagus, ornamented with dolphins, and bearing the inscription B 29.

ΛΟΓΓΑΙΑΝΟC · ΚΑΤ · ΠΡΟΗ ΕΙΔΩΝ ΑΠΡΙΑ; and another inscription in Latin to HASELLICA, apparently on a step of the staircase.

FIG. 52.—*Small Sarcophagus found in staircase* B.

B 32. BB$_4$. A small opening on the left leads into a rectangular chamber coated with coarse plaster, and almost destroyed by a modern passage which passed close above it. The entrance to the gallery B$_4$, cut through so many *loculi*, shows the damage done to the sepulchres in B in its formation, although a point was chosen with special care that the damage might be as small as possible. The wall on the right is all in ruins. On the left wall may be observed a line of *loculi*, near the roof evidently belonging to a different period to those below them, from which they differ in size and arrangement. These indicate the existence of a gallery similar to I$_1$ in the *ambulacrum* A, excavated when B was filled with earth, and probably communicating with B$_4$ after the staircase was blocked up, since it has no other outlet apparent, and must have been on the same level with that gallery. From the entrance of B$_4$ to the bottom of the flight, the steps are well preserved and covered with slabs of terra-cotta.

Ambulacrum. B. The *ambulacrum* itself is paved with large tiles, all of which bear the stamp OPUS DOLIARE EX PRÆDIIS DOMINI N ET FIGL NOVIS, that is, according to Marini, from the imperial manufactory of Marcus Aurelius. As we approach the entrance to the gallery B$_3$ communicating with the *areñarium*, we notice the wall on either side of that entrance is sustained by masonry of *tufa* and brickwork, and that the entrance itself has been cut through some of the *loculi*, an evident proof of its having been made at a later period than the *ambulacrum*. The masonry, however, does not reach the present roof, because at the time that it was built the roof had not been raised to its present elevation by the excavation of the small gallery B$_4$.

On the right hand, now at a somewhat high elevation, is a

sepolcro a mensa, 37, which is important as proving the present floor of the *ambulacrum* to be at a considerably lower level than when it was originally constructed. And a practised eye will at once perceive that the adjacent entrance into I was originally opened at a level which corresponded to that required by the tomb. The entrance to H, on the contrary, is little more than six feet high, and could not therefore have been made use of when the floor of the *ambulacrum* was nearly four feet above its present level. From the arrangement of the *loculi*, however, it appears that an entrance into H was contemplated in the original design, although not carried into effect until after the depression of the pavement of B. The masonry on either side of H and other signs show that H was once continued in a direct line into B, but was at a later period moved about twenty inches to the left.

B 37. B I. B H.

On the left the wall is much broken, and on the right we see that the gallery G was commenced originally from this end, although it appears to have been only commenced, and not proceeded with until the *ambulacrum* was deepened. The small gallery in the roof is very discernible at this point. The entrance to F shows the same traces of having been opened after the level of B had been lowered which we observed in the entrance to H. The passage B_2, cut through three *loculi*, and even now of a very moderate height, could not have been made until after the deepening of the *ambulacrum*. Immediately above this door we perceive in the roof the termination of the small upper gallery. From the holes high up in the left wall, it would seem that the *fossors* began at the high level to open a way into the gallery E, but never carried out their design, probably because the wall was afterwards filled with *loculi*.

B G. B F. B B_2.

The entrance into D was made at the high level, and then, as at the other end, excavated so as to suit the reduced level of B. The wall above this entrance is modern, and belonged to the wine-stores constructed here in the last century. The opening into T_5 is also modern. It is worthy of notice that the point where B and C meet is not a sharp angle, as is usually the case in the meeting of catacomb galleries, but a curve. This peculiarity is an additional work of antiquity, for it suggests

B D. B C.

the thought that at the period when these galleries were first formed, the work of the *fossors* had not yet settled into a system. Few *loculi* appear to have been cut in this corner, and

Gallery B_1.

those few at a later period, so that the gallery B_1, which connects this *area* with a neighbouring *arenarium*, need not, and did not, belong to the earlier periods of this part of the cemetery, even though its entrance did not occasion the demolition of any *loculi*. After a few steps we come upon a modern opening which leads into the *area* of St. Soteris, excavated at a higher level than that which we are now describing.

Gallery B_2.

B_2 appears hardly to have been formed and filled with *loculi*, when it was perceived that its direct leading into B endangered the discovery of the whole cemetery. It was accordingly half blocked up by a thick wall, and then entirely closed at the point where it fell into T_1.

Gallery B_3.

B led into the *arenaria* through T and B_4, and B_5 into Y and Z, the latter being entered by the steps cut through the upper part of the original flight, B.

Ambulacrum C.

The *ambulacrum* which unites A with B was cleared out in 1863, and is wide and very lofty. The marks of a change of level are not very apparent in the gallery itself, but having been proved to the very ends of A and B, the same change must necessarily have been effected in C. The *loculi* in this gallery are large, arranged in order, and with numerous niches for lamps, &c. Some of the large tiles, bearing the stamp of the manufactories of the emperors M. Aurelius and Commodus,

C 49, 50.

remain still in the *loculi*. Two large *loculi* are to be seen on the right immediately after turning the corner out of B_1, and

C 52.

further on in the left wall is a *sepolcro a mensa*. These being near the floor, are marked in Fig. 42 as having been constructed subsequently to the deepening of the gallery. Above the *sepolcro a mensa* is an opening in the wall near the roof, made by excavators of the last century who were making their way from a higher set of galleries in the *area* of St. Eusebius, and through this opening must have fallen into the *ambulacrum* C several fragments of inscriptions belonging to that *area*, and differing entirely in character from the other inscriptions found here. One of these has the ☧, of which no other instance

occurs in this *area;* and of another the remainder has been found in a gallery of the *area* of St. Eusebius.

The entrance to C_2 is cut through *loculi*, and therefore of later date than the *ambulacrum*. The gallery is full of earth, and unexplored; but above the entrance we see in the section on page 403 another passage which must have crossed C when the latter was full of earth, and which is continued almost until it meets D. The passage is in direct communication with the *area* of St. Eusebius, and appears to have been deepened considerably after its first construction, either by modern excavators or by graves having been made in its floor. See the section of it q_3 in Fig. 41. Gallery C_2.

Another doorway leads into the gallery C_1, which apparently belongs to the same system of passages as C_2, and bears marks of having been formed about the same time. The fragments of inscriptions found in these two galleries are of a character similar to those in the *ambulacrum* itself. C_1.

D is a lofty gallery, excavated, as we have seen, during the first period of the *area*, and afterwards deepened like the *ambulacra* A, B, which it connects. Many inscriptions, the majority of which are in Greek, have been found in this gallery, which was explored in the winter of 1862–63. D.

E was excavated, as we have seen, subsequently to the depression of the level of A_1, and throughout its whole length is never more than six feet high. Many of its *loculi* are closed with *tufa* constructions. E.

F was opened at the high level of A, and then cut away to correspond to the depressed level at which it enters B. The little passage F_1 was evidently excavated after the lowering of the floor, for it carefully avoids breaking into E. F.

It was afterwards demolished in part, in order to make way for a well of ancient construction, but still holding water. The well is furnished with foot-holes, in order to admit of a man descending to clean it, as may be seen in all other ancient wells connected with the Catacombs. Well F_1.

G, on the contrary, commenced from B at the high level, and was continued so as to fall into A after the level had been lowered. Gallery G.

H commenced from A at the high level, and fell into B after

H. the floor of that *ambulacrum* had been lowered. Its floor was paved with marble. The change in its direction near its conjunction with B we have already noticed, and careful observation shows that change to have been made at the same time with the sinking of the staircase H_2. The pavement here is composed of tiles of the date of Marcus Aurelius. The staircase H_2 is at first excavated in *tufa* with *loculi* in the walls, it is then flanked with thick walls of *tufa* and brickwork, in which some *loculi* have been scooped out. About half-way down the staircase on the left is seen a doorway in the wall with an arch turned over it, but walled up, apparently a gallery commenced and speedily abandoned. On the right is seen a half-open *loculus*, within which, instead of a skeleton, was found a little terra-cotta sarcophagus containing the body of an infant. The upper portions of the *loculi* in this place are not flat, but somewhat arched, and the roof of the staircase breaks into the gallery I, which is half blocked up by the masonry sustaining it. The staircase, after all, remained useless, for it was found impossible to use, for sepulchral purposes, the gallery into which it leads. The tiles are in many cases stamped with the mark of the manufactory of M. Aurelius.

Cubiculum H_1. The *cubiculum* H_1 whose entrance is immediately opposite to H_2, differs from all the chambers we have hitherto described, in the very inferior plaster with which it is lined, in the barrel roof, and especially in the double *arcosolia*, which are here met with for the first time in this *area*. These circumstances justify De Rossi in assigning to it a later date than that of the staircase H_2.

Gallery I. The gallery I was originally excavated at the high level of A and B, as we have seen from the openings into both those *ambulacra*. It was afterwards cut away so as to correspond with the new level, and thus it is found at present, with its floor sloping downwards from the middle each way towards A and B, while the middle portion itself remains still at the higher level. The walls are much damaged by the rude attempts to convert it into a wine cellar in the last century, and scarcely any inscriptions have been found on it. The opening by which the majority of visitors pass into this gallery from the Crypt of St. Cecilia is quite modern, but a little farther

on, on the left hand, we may, by climbing to the top of a heap of rubbish, penetrate into the little crooked gallery I_1, which here crossed this gallery when it was filled up with earth, in its way from A_5 to the Crypt of St. Cecilia, where it seems to have terminated. It contains a number of small *loculi*, all open, above one of which is traced on the mortar the sign of the cross thus +. There are signs of an intention of excavating two branches of this little gallery along I, in a similar manner to those which we have noticed along A and B, but the intention appears never to have been carried into effect. The modern constructions along the part of the gallery I usually traversed by visitors are the work of the Commission of Sacred Archæology, and were rendered necessary by the rude staircase which had been made into the crypt at this point, at the time when it was used as a cellar.

Small Gallery I_1.

We now enter L, the first gallery which branches off from the *ambulacrum* A, and which still retains some traces of the fine smooth plaster with which it was originally coated. We have already seen how the construction of another flight of stairs into A rendered it necessary to make the steps by which we now descend into L. At the bottom of these steps, we notice, on the right hand, traces of the original wall having been cut away in order to widen the passage; and similar traces may be observed beneath the *luminare* which now gives light to that which originally formed the end of this gallery, proving that the Crypt of St. Cecilia was originally entered through the Papal Crypt. Slight traces also appear of the deepening which this passage must have undergone when the original level of A was lowered.

Gallery L.

At the entrance to L_1 we see in the pavement and on the walls traces of the original level having been about a foot higher than it is at present. The door of this crypt, which is the central and most important in the Catacomb, as having been the burial-place of the Popes of the third century, is five feet wide, and constructed of brickwork. The plaster which covers it is covered with *graffiti*, the majority of which are at a higher level than would naturally have been chosen by those who wished to write on the wall, so that these *graffiti* would seem to have been upon the plaster at the time when the

Papal Crypt. L_1.

pavement was lowered. Others, being cut off in the middle, must have been written previous to the widening of the door, and consequently to the construction of the arch above it which is covered with three coats of plaster, two of them decorated with painting. The crypt itself is now almost entirely reconstructed with modern masonry, for the ruinous condition in which it was found when cleared of earth in 1854 rendered this absolutely necessary for its safety. It is impossible to determine whether the original chamber has *loculi* in its walls, or what was the nature of its roof, so many successive works have succeeded each other in this important crypt. See the description, pp. 287–314.

The earliest modification of this chamber appears to have been the slight lowering of the level of the floor, the traces of which remain in the lowest range of *loculi*, and especially in the large sepulchre at the end of the crypt, which had its parapet made in the best style of imperial lateritial work. At the same period with this parapet was formed the little passage leading into the Crypt of St. Cecilia, as the form of the parapet itself shows, and as is proved still more convincingly by the brickwork of the passage being of the same kind as that which covers the parapet. This was afterwards covered, first with white plaster, then again with rough mortar, in order to attach to it slabs of marble, and lastly, the roof was lined with mosaic. Above the large sepulchre, which must originally have been a *loculo a mensa*, we cannot see any traces either of other *loculi* or even of plaster. In front of it are two steps, the lower of which has four holes in order to receive the pillars that supported the *mensa* of the altar, which here stood out, with the episcopal chair behind it. A fragment of marble in the corner shows the chamber to have been once lined with similar slabs.

The right-hand wall, when it was first discovered, contained nothing but its eight large *loculi*, two of which, close to the floor, had space for marble *sarcophagi*. Among the rubbish was found the *mensa* of a tomb, with a vine sculptured on its edge in very low relief; and on the edge of another was carved the inscription OYPBANOCE . . . Between the two sets of *loculi* stood a pillar, of which the base is still in its position,

and a wall forming a *sarcophagus* jutting out into the chamber in front of the *loculus* makes a continuation of this base. Remains of a similar arrangement on the left-hand wall justify the restoration of De Rossi, while in the roof above the broken column, which is here in its original position, is the shaft of a second *luminare*, now blocked up. The wall near the entrance is formed of masonry, with traces of an inferior kind of plaster. The base and mark in the wall of a small column still remain at the left-hand side as we enter, while above the door is the space for the oblong tablet of a large inscription. In the wall, on the other side, is a niche for a lamp, or for the vessel in which was burned the hallowed oil of which St. Gregory the Great speaks. A similar niche is right in front of the entrance in the left wall of the gallery L. The Papal Crypt had a barrel roof, greatly occupied by the large *luminare*. The pavement was of marble, and covered tombs made beneath it, the inscription upon one of which is still in its place, ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙC ΚΑΤ · ΡΙΓ · ΚΑL · ΙΟΥΝ—*Demetrius, buried on the 20th of May.* See De Rossi's restoration of this crypt, Plate III.

The chamber L_2 has its three principal walls entirely covered with a thick wall of brickwork, which has considerably reduced the size of the *cubiculum*. The arches in these walls have been much destroyed, and the *loculi* of the primitive walls behind them have suffered also. Still enough remains to show that they were covered with fine white smooth plaster, that the roof was vaulted in the cruciform manner, and, like the walls, adorned with fresco. The central figure in the roof is that of Orpheus, Plate XVIII. 2. All the characteristics of this chamber are those of the very earliest portions of the *area*. *Cubiculum* L_2.

The vestibule M is constructed entirely of masonry, and De Rossi confesses himself unable to account for its peculiar form. Its walls are lined with plaster covered all over with *graffiti*. Here were found a number of polygonal paving-stones of basalt, evidently having formed part of the pavement of the cross-road which we have called the Via Appio-Ardeatina. Vestibule M.

The portico to the Crypt of St. Cecilia is excavated in the *tufa*, and sustained by brick arches. The inscriptions on the *loculi* found here apparently belong to the period of St. Damasus. At the end of N a narrow passage runs close behind the Crypt Portico N.

Crypt of St. Cecilia O.

of St. Cecilia. That crypt itself is entered by two steps, above which are arches in brickwork. But behind the right-hand wall of the entrance we see these *loculi* which mark the position of the gallery Q, before the works of Pope Damasus had completely transformed this portion of the Catacomb. Entering the crypt, we notice on the left, opposite to the tomb of St. Cecilia, a piece of brickwork forming the segment of a circle, which, when complete, was the pit in which the little gallery I_1 lost itself. This pit, and the end of the gallery afterwards incorporated into the crypt, were distinct from it when first constructed. The chamber itself, therefore, must have been of the restricted dimensions represented in the plans of the third and fourth periods of excavation in pages 403, 407.

Cubiculum P_1.

The chamber P_1 has its entrance almost blocked up by the staircase P, which has been already described, page 413. The walls of the chamber are in a very ruinous state, and the *loculi* broken. It is not easy to determine whether the *arcosolium* at the end of it was made within a pre-existing recess, or whether the brickwork and marble with which it has been adorned were later additions; but it is certain that before these portions were added, with the inscription to *Dasumia Quirica* which occupies the lunette, there was a simple *loculus*, closed with a slab of marble, which these constructions afterwards covered. Above the door was found in 1854 this inscription of the year 290:—

VIBIV · FIMVS R · VII KA SEP
DIC · IIII · ET · MAX · COS.

"Vibius Fimus died (*recessit*) August 26th, when Diocletian for the fourth time and Maximinus were Consuls."

P_2.

The *cubiculum* P_2 is in a most ruinous state; the left wall being quite broken away, and the left only sustained by masonry, the plaster has nearly all fallen. From its position this chamber appears to have been constructed about the same time with the staircase P. The passage leading to it is sustained by masonry.

Gallery Q.

The gallery Q has now been occupied by the staircase P, but formerly formed a communication between the gallery S

and the Crypt of St. Cecilia. The tombs formerly excavated in its floor have been destroyed by the constructions which support the staircase P; but within one of these tombs, near the entrance to Q_1, were found two *plumbatæ*, or leaden balls covered with a shell of bronze, and each fastened to a bronze chain. It is possible that these might have been weights for scales, but history records instances of even these weights being used as implements of torture, and the burial of these in the Christian's tomb certainly favours the supposition that they had been the instruments of his martyrdom. The walls of this gallery are strengthened by masonry in order to sustain the staircase P. On the left wall, among this masonry, may be seen traces of a flight of broad steps in the *tufa* leading up to S. These steps must have been demolished before the entrance to Q_3 could have been made, otherwise it would not have been of sufficient height to have admitted any one into that chamber. The entrance to S was afterwards closed with a wall when the staircase P was made, although the outline of a door was traced on this wall, as if it had been at one time contemplated to reopen that passage. Q 78.

The plaster near the entrance to Q_1 is covered with *graffiti*, most of them in Greek, and apparently belonging to the third century. The chamber itself, together with the others in this gallery, was cleared out in 1855. The right-hand wall of it, cut in the *tufa*, is now in ruins, but preserves the traces of rather large *loculi*. Part of the left wall is in ruins, another part filled with ancient masonry, and the remainder with the whole lower end of the chamber is faced with a solid wall of stone and brick-work, with four pieces of marble jutting out like brackets about seven and a half feet from the ground. This brickwork forms a solid arch, which fills half the roof of the chamber. The other half is taken up by the *luminare*, which together with the passage R, giving access to this chamber when the substructions of P had blocked up the original doorway, show that this chamber was one of the important shrines of the Catacomb. The *graffiti* and the inscriptions confirm this evidence. *Cubiculum* Q_1. Passage R.

On the opposite side of the gallery is another chamber, Q_2, with a barrel roof, the *luminare* in which formerly received light *Cubiculum* Q_2.

from that of Q_1 but was blocked up by the building of the staircase P. Nevertheless, a window was opened over the door, in order to compensate to some extent for this loss, and at the same time the chamber was coated with plaster, which is consequently not of so fine a kind as that of which some remains are to be seen in Q_1. The *loculi* are large, and those near the ground are sunk below the floor. On the left side is an *arcosolium*, but its arch is of the same construction as the masonry at the door, so that its antiquity is not greater than that of the staircase P. Some remarkable sarcophagi were found in this chamber, as also in Q_1. They will be described elsewhere.

Cubiculum Q_3. We have seen that the entrance to Q_3 was formed after the demolition of the stairs 78, leading to S. At the end of this chamber is seen a large *arcosolium* once covered with marble. The parapet of this tomb is so high that it would have been impossible to have used the *mensa* as an altar if the priest had stood on the present pavement. This is a proof of the floor having been lowered; in fact, we descend a step on entering it. The inconvenient height of the *mensa* of the *arcosolium* was remedied by a little step covered with a slab of *giallo antico* marble, which now stands in front of the tomb. A small passage in the left-hand corner leads into another chamber, with a little gallery stretching out of it, in which is an *arcosolium*, so arranged as to avoid falling into Q_4 which must have been in existence before these appendices to Q_3 were made.

Q_4. The chamber Q_4 has two *arcosolia* in its right-hand wall, one lined with marble, and the other with fine white plaster. In the left wall are *loculi*. A massive wall for the support of the staircase fills up a considerable part of the chamber on the left, and the roof is pierced by a large *luminare*.

Gallery S. It appears from the marks of the pickaxes of the *fossors* in the walls that the gallery S was first commenced at the end where it was united to the gallery Q, although it is somewhat higher than the level of that gallery, and corresponds to that of the adjacent *area*, with which it was connected by the passage *b*. (See plan on page 407.) On the plaster of the *loculi* are *graffiti* in Greek, *e.g.*, ΤΗCCΥΡΕΕΙC · ΜΝΗCΘΗ ΖΗCΗ and ΑΤΤΙΚΕΙΑΝΟC. Some of the *loculi* have been broken through

in order to make an entrance to *b*, which proves that the gallery S existed previous to its being made the means of connecting the two *areæ*. The *cubiculi* S_2, S_3, S_4, are all constructed with barrel roofs, and contain *arcosolia*. Immediately beneath the cross-road is the entrance to the *cubiculum* S_5, of similar construction, in the left wall of which only one *loculus* appears, evidently from a fear of weakening the rock beneath the staircase A, which must therefore have been in use when this chamber was made. Opposite the entrance to S_5 is the way into another gallery, S_6, leading into the labyrinth, clearly of much later date than the gallery from which it branches off. The *cubiculum* S_7 is similar to the others along this gallery, but its roof is damaged by a passage from the labyrinth having broken into it. In a *loculus* on the left is the inscription MOTCIKIA still in its place.

Cubicula S_2, S_3, S_4.

Cubiculum S_5.

The gallery T is a continuation of B_3, and connects that passage with the *arenarium*. Its floor slopes continually towards the level of the *arenarium*, and its roof is cut in steps, sinking as much as nine and a half feet in a very short space. The galleries T_1 and T_3, and others which branch off from it, are narrow and low, as is also the chamber T_2, which contains a large *loculus a mensa*. The *loculi* in U are large, and contained several fine inscriptions in Greek and Latin, *e.g.*, EICTEPKOPI; KAI · NATAAEΩC AGATEMERIS · SPIRITVM · TVVM · INTER · SANCTOS. U_1 and U_2 are branches of the *arenarium*, but contain a few *loculi*. Some of the *loculi* in the gallery V are still intact, but most of them are destroyed, as also in V_1. V_2 leads into the *arenarium*, which is evidently more ancient than this gallery which here opens into it.

Gallery T into *arenarium*.

U.

V.

V_1, V_2.

The vast gallery of the *arenarium*, with its branches X_1, X_2, X_3, needs no description, and the secret passage X_4, leading into it, has already been described, page 347.

Arenarium X.

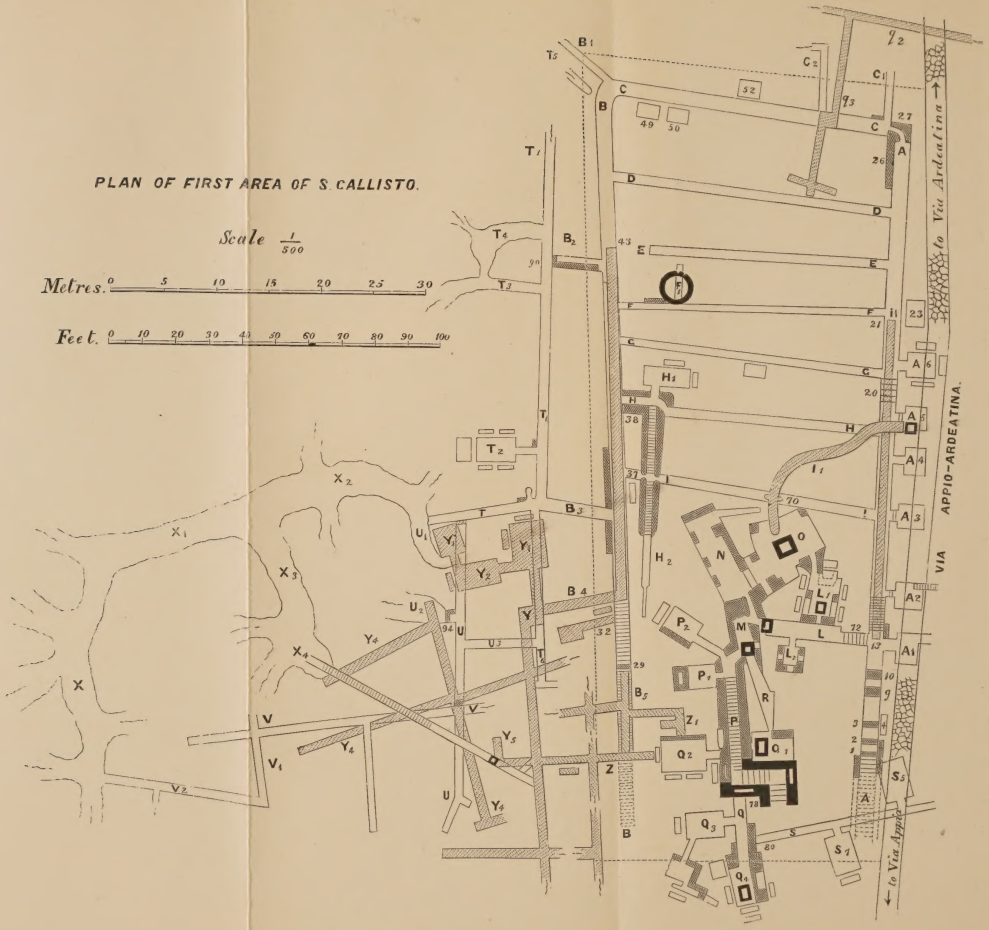
X_4.

The gallery Y, with its dependencies, is low and narrow, and at the level of the galleries excavated above the earth which filled up the main *ambulacra*. Three *cubicula*, Y_1, Y_2, Y_3, are of the rudest description; while Z is merely a continuation of the *hypogeum* entered through B_5, and a portion of it breaks into the roof of the chamber Q_2.

Y.

Z.

The reader who has had patience to study this analysis will easily perceive how fully it justifies the account of this *area* given in the second chapter, and will be able to estimate the magnitude of De Rossi's labours in thus analysing every portion of this vast necropolis.


PLAN OF FIRST AREA OF S. CALLISTO.
Scale 1/500
Metres. 0 5 10 15 20 25 30
Feet. 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
VIA APPIO-ARDEATINA.
to Via Ardeatina
to Via Appia

APPENDIX I.

—o—

Note A (page 23).

TWO VERSIONS OF THE ACTS OF ST. CECILIA COMPARED.

THE "Acts of the Martyrdom of St. Cecilia," published by Bosio in 1600, and republished by Laderchi in 1722, were taken from a late MS. in the possession of her church in Trastevere. The Greek version of Metaphrastes was made from an older MS., of which Latin copies also are extant; and it will be worth while to set side by side a passage of the Acts as it stands in each of these two versions. The additions in the later MS. which we have *italicised* are very significant.

Almachius ordered Cecilia to be brought before him, and he asked her, What is your name? She answered, Cecilia.	Almachius *the Prefect* orders *Saint* Cecilia to be brought before him. And he asked her, What is your name? She answered, Cecilia, *among men; but, what is much more distinguished, I am a Christian.*
A. said, Of what condition are you?	A. said, Of what condition are you?
C. answered, I am free, noble, and of senatorial descent (*clarissima*).	C. answered, I am a Roman citizen, distinguished (*illustris*),[1] and noble.
A. said, I ask you about your religion.	A. said, I ask you about your religion, *for we know that you are noble by birth.*
C. answered, Your questioning then took a very foolish beginning, to expect two answers to be included in one inquiry.	*Saint* Cecilia said, Your questioning took a very foolish exordium, to expect two answers to be included in one inquiry.
A. said, Whence have you so	*The Prefect* A. said, Whence

[1] The vagueness of this word marks a later date than the exact specific words used in other versions.

great presumption in answering?

C. said, From a good conscience, and a faith unfeigned.

A. said, Do you not know what power I have?

C. said, You know not what power you have; for if you question me about your power, I will manifest it to you by most true assertions.

A. said to her, Tell me what you know.

C. said to him, The power of man is as when a bladder, &c.

have you so great presumption in answering?

Saint C. said, From a good conscience, and a faith unfeigned.

A. said, Do you not know what power I have?

The Blessed C. said, And do you not know whose spouse I *am?*

A. said, Whose?

Saint C. said, Of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A. said, I know you to be the wife of Valerian.

Saint C. said, *O Prefect*, you know not yourself what power you have; for if you question me about your power, I will manifest it to you by most true assertions.

A. *the Prefect* said to her, If you know anything, tell me. *I shall be delighted to hear a discourse from your mouth.*

Saint C. said, *In proportion as you are delighted, so shall you be judged. Nevertheless, listen.* The power of man is as when a bladder, &c.

It is clear from the prologue to these Acts that their compiler lived at a time subsequent to the triumph of Christianity; yet it is difficult to believe that he had not access to the genuine official documents of the trial, or at least faithful copies of them, when he wrote this detailed account of the examination, for in its older and simpler version it has all the preciseness of the legal forms of a criminal process.

Note B (page 46).

Discovery of the Tomb and Relics of St. Hyacinth.

The tomb of St. Hyacinth and the gravestone of St. Protus found in the Catacomb of St. Hermes on the Via Salaria in 1845—*History of the relics of St. Protus—St. Hyacinth's relics supposed to be with those of his brother, St. Protus—The origin of this conjecture explained—The present discovery, however, demonstrates its falsehood—Detailed account of the actual condition of St. Hyacinth's relics.*

The discovery of the tomb and body of St. Hyacinth by Father Marchi deserves to be told in detail, as showing how innocently a false tradition may be created about the possession of such or such a relic by any particular church.

Discovery of tomb of St. Hyacinth in 1845;

On the evening of Good Friday, March 21, 1845, one of the men employed in digging in the Catacombs, came to F. Marchi, in the Roman College, with a slip of paper in his hand, on which were these words,—"DP. III. IDUS SEPTEBR YACINTHUS, MARTYR,"—which he said he had just copied from a stone that was still enclosing a grave in a chapel of the Catacomb of St. Hermes (or Sta. Bassilla, as it is sometimes called). This excited not a little surprise in the learned Father, who knew from ancient calendars, martyrologies, and other sources, that the two brothers, St. Protus and St. Hyacinth, who suffered martyrdom together under the Emperor Valerian, had been buried in this Catacomb, and that their festival was kept on this very day, the 11th of September; but he thought that he also knew that their bodies had been long since removed to other churches. Aringhi [1] states that they were translated from the church of San Salvatore in Trastevere to that of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, under Clement VIII., in the year 1592. However, when Father Marchi visited the spot on Monday morning, in company with a painter and an architect to draw illustrations of the chapel, he satisfied himself that this grave had certainly never been opened; he observed also that the chamber in which it was, was only one of five chambers, all connected together, receiving light from a very large *luminare*, and having a double approach by staircases from two opposite sides, just as he had before noticed with reference to the principal churches of other Catacombs. In a word, the place had every arrangement necessary for accommodating a large number of the faithful, just as one would expect at the tombs of such famous saints as St. Protus and St. Hyacinth. Moreover, turning over the heaps of earth which encumbered the pavement,

[1] Aringhi, ii. p. 235.

and of the tombstone of St. Protus.

he found a fragment of marble, with the words, SEPULCHRUM PROTI M(*artyris*), and this placed it beyond a doubt that here had certainly been the burial-place of those two glorious martyrs, and that one of them still lay in his original tomb.

But because the discovery contradicted the popular belief and the claims of the Church of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, F. Marchi rightly judged it advisable to proceed with unusual care and circumspection; he therefore left the grave exactly as it was, and spent the next three weeks in a diligent investigation of every record he could discover which could throw light upon the history of the two brothers; paying frequent visits to the chapel, however, in the meantime, accompanied by cardinals, bishops, prelates, and others, whose devotion or curiosity led them to the spot. The result of his historical researches was as follows. About a century after their martyrdom, the chapel in which they had been buried

History of relics of St. Protus.

was so blocked up with earth, that Pope Damasus was obliged to repair it, and, according to his usual habit, he took the opportunity at the same time of putting up an epitaph of verses in their honour.

In the beginning of the sixth century, Pope Symmachus again restored the chapel, and the bodies of the martyrs were still there at the end of the seventh century.

The next trace of them belongs to the middle of the ninth century, when it is recorded that Leo IV. placed under the high altar of the Church of SS. Quattro Coronati the heads of St. Protus, St. Sebastian, Sta. Prassede, and others, together with the bodies of fifty-seven martyrs, taken either from the cemeteries or from other churches. Now, we know that Paschal I. had translated the body of Sta. Prassede to the church dedicated to her honour, and that Gregory IV. had translated that of St. Sebastian to the Basilica now known by his name, but before that time called after St. Peter and St. Paul, whose bodies, as we have seen, once found a temporary resting-place there; and although we do not know who had translated the body of St. Protus, yet we are certain that it had been done some time prior to this, for Leo would never have removed the head only, and left the rest of his body in the Catacombs, since the motive assigned by his predecessors for removing the martyrs' bodies from the Catacombs at all was "*ne remanerent neglectui*," that they should not remain exposed to neglect and irreverence in the midst of such a chaos of ruins. Leo's act can only be explained by supposing that some church was already in possession of the whole body, and that he did not choose to deprive it of more than a part; and this church can have been no other than that already spoken of, the Church of San Salvatore in Trastevere,

for from hence it was undoubtedly transferred to the church of the Florentines at the close of the sixteenth century.

The reader will observe that there is no mention in the account of Pope Leo's proceedings of either the whole or part of the body of St. Hyacinth ; yet if this had been within his reach, it is impossible that he should have overlooked it when he went out of his way so far as even to rob other churches in order to enrich his own with all the precious relics he could find.

St. Hyacinth's relics *supposed* to be with those of St. Protus. Why?

How then could the Florentines assert that they had the bodies of both the brothers? They were told so by the Church of San Salvatore, where an inscription in the pavement under the high altar expressly said, "*Sub hoc lapide requiescunt sanctorum corpora gloriosissimorum Proti et Hyacinthi.*" But this inscription was not older than the fourteenth or fifteenth century, and between this and the eighth or ninth century there was abundance of time to confound the memory of the original translation of the relics. Moreover, there was in the same church another inscription, or rather half of it* (half of the epitaph written by Pope Damasus), and in this Hyacinthus was named as well as Protus, and everybody knew that both had suffered together, and that they had been buried in the same chapel, and that the body of St. Hyacinth was not to be heard of anywhere else. It was but natural, therefore, that they should conclude that, as they certainly had the body of the one brother, so also they had that of the other.

But was not the mistake discovered when the relics were removed to San Giovanni? Christopher Castelletti, who has left us an account of the translation, says that they dug beneath the stone until they came to a large marble case ; that they opened this, and found no entire bodies, for that other churches had been enriched at various times with some portions of them ; but he adds that there were a great many bones. There were legs, arms, ribs, one jawbone with teeth, and several loose teeth. This account exactly confirmed all that F. Marchi had been able to discover from an examination of the history. Here is no mention of two bodies. On the contrary, there is a conjectural explanation why two bodies could *not* be found. Nor does there appear to have been any head at all, only a single jawbone and some loose teeth, which might have been accidentally left when Leo IV. separated the head of St. Protus from its body.

Still the question remained, why did not those who originally

* The other half was, and is, in the Church of the Quattro Coronati ; and F. Marchi conjectures that the inscription had been divided at the same time as the body. There is no easier way of accounting for half of it being in San Salvatore, and the other half in the Quattro Coronati.

Why they were *not* removed with those of St. Protus.

extracted the body of St. Protus, extract also the body of St. Hyacinth? But this, too, was soon answered, when F. Marchi came on Saturday, the 19th of April, with the Pope's Sacristan (an Augustinian bishop) and other dignitaries, and with two or three of the excavators, to open the grave itself. One of the restorations effected by Pope Damasus, or by Pope Symmachus, had been an entirely new pavement, made of *tufa* and Roman cement, which in that damp place, under the open *luminare*, had become as hard as any stone. St. Hyacinth's grave had been excavated in the very lowest tier of graves in the wall. Still the whole of it had been above the level of the *original* pavement, but now it was half above, and half below, the upper and more modern pavement, so that it was not until some portion of this had been broken, that the excavators were able to remove the marble slab, and expose the interior of the grave. Moreover, the crumbling, insecure nature of the soil was such, that it was manifest the whole wall on that side would inevitably give way, now that its last stay had been removed. And so it happened, not immediately, indeed, but within a few days, so that the whole chapel is again a mass of ruins; and we may confidently conjecture that it was a fear of this disaster which induced former generations to leave the grave undisturbed.

Examination of relics of St. Hyacinth.

We must not omit to mention the interior of this grave, because it brings to light two or three interesting features in the history of the Catacombs which we have not had a convenient opportunity of mentioning elsewhere. At first sight it appeared to be full of mud, and the uninitiated began to fear that after all their care they were only to be rewarded with disappointment. F. Marchi, however, soon explained to them, that where the rain-water came pouring down a *luminare* it brought much of the soil of the Campagna along with it; but that though it penetrated the lower graves, and filled them with mud, yet this only destroyed the unformed bones of infants, not those of a full-grown man, such as St. Hyacinth was. He immediately began to divide the mud, therefore, with a piece of cane, and soon brought to light the bones of a man; only, instead of being in their natural condition, they were partly burnt to a cinder, and all had manifestly been subjected to the action of fire. We cannot account for this, since the genuine Acts of the martyrdom are lost.

Lastly, when these bones were removed into broad daylight, and were being examined by a professor of anatomy in the Pope's Palace, F. Marchi observed several gold threads, crossing and recrossing one another, lying amid the earth and about the bones; and when these had been collected and submitted to a professor of

Natural Philosophy, he declared it certain that the body had been wrapt up in some very precious material; whether it was what we call cloth of gold, or whether it had been stuff or silk embroidered with gold, he could not say, as only these threads had survived.

This is a valuable confirmation of what we already knew, not only from the testimony of Eusebius and others in individual historical cases, but also from Bosio, Boldetti, and others, who had observed the same phenomena in many graves of martyrs which they had opened. Boldetti especially mentions one, in which all the bones of the skeleton were perfect excepting a broken skull, and the fragments of the cloth of gold only covered this one part of the body. The relics of St. Hyacinth now rest under one of the altars in the newly-restored Basilica of St. Paul *fuori le mura.*

Note C (page 98).

Explanation of Pagan Inscriptions found in the Catacombs.

Pagan inscriptions found in the Catacombs, but shown not to belong to them, by their contents, their mutilated or erased condition, and their position—Instances to the contrary, alleged by Professor Settele, examined, and proved to have been falsely reported—In cemeteries at a distance from Rome, the same precautions as to erasure, &c., not always observed.

Another argument in favour of the use of the Catacombs as places of burial by Christians and Pagans in common is founded upon the fact that Pagan inscriptions have often been found on gravestones in the Catacombs. De Rossi treats of this subject almost at the end of the third volume of his "Roma Sotterranea" (pp. 640, *et seq.*). "Boldetti," he says, "Lupi, and Marangoni gave themselves a deal of trouble about this question, diligently explaining that the Pagan stones found in our cemeteries give no support whatever to the absurd supposition that Pagans and Christians were here mixed in burial promiscuously. Lupi observed with truth, that the very stones themselves tell their own story, and show that they do not belong to the cemetery, but come from without. Very many of them are not sepulchral at all, but manifestly belong to public monuments; some are sacred, some historical, some honorary, and some were tablets having to do with games of chance. Even those that are sepulchral evidently belong to very different tombs from those to which they are found attached:

Pagan inscriptions found in Catacombs, but not belonging to them.

Proofs of this statement from their contents,

most of them speak of sepulchres belonging to a whole family, its freedmen, and posterity; or they note the measure of more or less extensive areas, whereas we see them affixed to tiny niches which will just hold one body or two. Many speak of a sepulchre that has been 'built,' that 'rises up from the ground,' and that has been 'repaired;' one even says that the monument to which it belongs has been 'damaged by the weather' (*a tempestate vexatum*). All this is certain and manifest in innumerable instances, partly recorded in books and MSS. by those who have gone before me, partly seen by myself, in all the cemeteries, and in increasing numbers every day. . . . It would be useless trouble to adduce and classify and examine every example of a matter which is of such obvious and notorious experience. I do not think it is useless, however, to observe attentively the ways in which the Christians of old made use of those stones in their cemeteries, and the precautions they took to make it plain that they did not belong to the Christian cemetery. Even where such precaution was quite unnecessary, nevertheless the ancient *fossors* diligently turned the inscribed side of the stone inwards, so that no eye could see it, or they erased the inscription, or they covered it with mortar. They only omitted to do one or other of these things in the numerous instances in which the epitaph was itself all mutilated, or its letters turned upside down, or inserted sideways, or in some other irregular position: in all which cases it was clearly shown that the presence of the stones here was merely material, and that they had no real relation with the name and the epitaph which properly belonged to the sepulchre. Sometimes there was a Pagan epitaph on both sides of the stone; they cancelled the one which would otherwise have been seen; the other, turned to the inside of the grave, they left untouched. I have always noted these things with great attention, not only on those stones which I have found attached to the graves, but also in those which had been detached before I saw them; for the marks of the mortar are sufficient to show how they had been placed. My experience on this point agrees with that of my predecessors, and specially Bosio, Fabretti, Boldetti, and Marangoni, the two last of whom explored the Catacombs for more than forty years, and had the privilege of seeing many galleries which had never been disturbed since they were first made.

their condition,

and their position.

Some alleged exceptions to this rule; apparent only, not real.

"One grave testimony, however, rises up on the other side and obliges a closer examination of this point, which is so essential to the science of Roma Sotterranea. Professor Settele (who was *Custode* of the Roman Catacombs before Father Marchi) read a paper in 1832 upon this very subject to the Pontifical Academy of

Archæology; in the course of which he says that in the winters of 1829 and 1830 there were found in the Cemetery of St. Hippolytus five Pagan epitaphs, not disguised in any of the ways that have been described; whence he argued that if five such instances had come to light within the short space of two years, many more must have been found in bygone days, but that Boldetti and Marangoni had been unwilling perhaps to acknowledge this, lest they might seem to give support to the calumny of certain heretics about the promiscuous burial of Christians and Pagans in the Catacombs, whilst in their good faith they never denied that they sometimes did find Pagan stones which had not been in any way defaced. He concluded by hazarding a conjecture that perhaps the cancelling and the covering up of the inscriptions upon those stones that had been so dealt with, had not been the work of the common *fossors* themselves, but rather of the clergy or of the better-instructed members of the laity; and that some of the galleries having been filled again with earth before any careful inspection of them had been made, it happened that several Pagan stones remained at the mouths of Christian graves uncorrected."

Upon this De Rossi comments as follows: "This last conclusion or conjecture of Professor Settele is, in my opinion, highly probable; but it in no way destroys, rather it confirms, the fact which has been observed with so much uniformity from the days of Bosio to our own, of great care and caution having been usually taken in this matter. But as to the universality of this fact and the number of exceptions which Settele supposed that Boldetti had carefully concealed, I have some important observations to make; and I must give explicit testimony as to the result of my own observations. And first as to Boldetti, it must have escaped Settele's observation that in one place he has made a positive and serious declaration that he has never found one of these Pagan stones placed aright at the mouth of a Christian grave; but that it is always either badly fitted to it, or is much disfigured; and that this is a point which cannot be called in question, since continual experience assures us of its truth. Settele's insinuation therefore must fall to the ground [or Boldetti's character for veracity be sacrificed].

"But my own experience has been almost uniformly the same as Boldetti's. In hundreds of instances I have seen Pagan stones either within the cemeteries themselves or that have been taken thence, always in the condition required by the precautions that were ordinarily taken. I can only remember a very few examples of what Settele supposes to have been so common. I have not found a single such instance in the whole Cemetery

Some real exceptions in cemeteries outside Rome.

of Callixtus; barely one or two in all the other cemeteries in the immediate proximity of Rome. On the other hand, I saw more than one during the excavation of the Catacomb of St. Alexander, seven miles out of Rome on the Via Nomentana, and again in another excavation five miles out of Rome on the Via Latina. Similar indications elsewhere make me believe that the cautions we have spoken of were more frequently neglected in the country cemeteries and generally in those at a distance from Rome, than in the cemeteries near the city. This is very natural and intelligible. Those who were buried in the cemeteries of hamlets and villages, and even of small towns, were for the most part illiterate: only a few of the tombs in those burial-places were provided with epitaphs, in which the Roman cemeteries are so extraordinarily rich. No wonder, then, that the untutored *fossors* and the faithful generally throughout the *ager Romanus* and in the suburban dioceses did not examine and correct the Pagan stones which they used, with that intelligent eye and watchful care of which there are such clear tokens in the cemeteries belonging to the metropolis.

"It remains that we should examine the group of exceptions of which Settele has spoken, the five Pagan stones found in the Cemetery of St. Hippolytus in the years 1829 and 1830. Is it credible that they all belong to that one place and were discovered in those years? I answer, first, that the singularity of the group inclines me to believe that the case was wholly exceptional, a local peculiarity; the fault of some ignorant or careless *fossor* who worked there, and that the galleries were filled up before they were inspected by the *master-fossor* or prefect of the cemetery. But, secondly, I must say that the fact is by no means so certain, nor was it so carefully verified, as Settele's statement would have led us to expect. He did not see with his own eyes the graves before they were opened; he only heard of it from others whom he does not name. Whoever they may have been, I cannot give full credence to their story. One of the five inscriptions which Settele expressly says was in no way cancelled or concealed, happened to come before me in 1843 in the storerooms of the Vatican Museum; and without knowing at the time anything of what others had said or written about it, I noticed of my own accord the marks of the mortar with which all the letters had once been covered up. The modern *fossors*, then, who found it had cleaned it to make it legible; and what they did for this stone they may have done for two others also, which I have not had an opportunity of examining. But the remaining two I know well, and believe

them both to be Christian. One may be seen in the portico of St. Mark's Church in Rome; the other I have set up in the gallery of the Christian Museum at the Lateran."

One would have thought that this very minute and distinct testimony from men who have spent their lives in frequenting and studying the Catacombs, would have for ever set at rest the question as to the true account to be given of the Pagan inscriptions found in these places. Yet Mr. Parker, after having had all this evidence laid before him, has been allowed to write in the "Archæological Journal" (vol. xxxiv. p. 433) in the opposite sense, and even to say that "De Rossi never goes so far as Dr. Northcote in his assertions on this subject;" Dr. Northcote's assertions having been a mere transcript from De Rossi's pages, the same as we have here laid before our readers.

In the same place, Mr. Parker has characterised our statement (in p. 250), that after the fourth century "*Cœmeterium* had become a generic word, including even the Basilicas and presbyteries that were within the precincts of the burial-ground, as simply begging the question," and adds, that no such meaning of the word is given in Schiller's Lexicon, nor in Ducange. It is a statement for which De Rossi has not thought it worth while to produce evidence in his "Roma Sotterranea," as it has long since been familiar to students of Christian archæology. He contents himself with referring to the writings of his predecessors (R. S. iii. 394). Nevertheless, lest the authority of a correspondent of the "Archæological Journal" should mislead any of our readers, we will insert here one or two of the proofs on which the statement rests.

We read in the Life of St. Mark I., A.D. 331, of a certain Basilica of St. Balbina, *quam cœmeterium constituit.* The meaning of this phrase is given in page 164. Here it is only necessary to point out the identification of the two words. Of Pope Liberius, A.D. 352, we read that he lived in the Cemetery of St. Agnes, and of other Popes in the fifth and sixth centuries that they lived in other cemeteries. Yet nobody believes that they lived either underground in the Catacombs, or among the tombs above ground, like the poor lunatic in the Gospels.[1] Neither would anybody but Mr. Parker translate "*tectum cœmeterii Sti. Tiburtii noviter fecit,*" "he renewed the paintings on the vaults over the body of St. Tiburtius in his sepulchre," but simply, "he renewed the roof of some building bearing that Saint's name." Of Pope Symmachus, A.D. 500, we read, *Nonnulla cœmeteria, maximé S. Pancratii, renovans, plura*

[1] St. Mark v. 3. See *Bullettino*, 1863, p. 43, 1867, p. 23.

illic nova quoque construxit;[1] and this last word naturally suggests what another contemporary Life of the same Pope distinctly tells us, that these restorations and constructions, both at St. Peter's, St. Paul's, St. Lawrence's, and St. Pancras', consisted of Basilicas, *hospices* for pilgrims and the poor, baths, &c. Of Pope Nicholas I., A.D. 858, we read in the "Liber Pontificalis,"[2] *De cœmeterio S. Christi Martyris Sebastiani in Catacumbâ ubi Apostolorum corpora jacuerant, quod multis ab annis ruerat, meliori illud fabricâ renovans, monasterium fecit, et monachos aggregavit.* Nothing can be more distinct than this testimony: "A cemetery which had lain in ruins for many years is restored with a better building and made a monastery."

These instances will give our readers some insight into the fundamental error of Mr. Parker's system of Chronology of the Catacombs. See Note [2] to page 252.

Note D (page 172).

St. Augustine's Opinion as to the Advantage to be gained from being Buried near the Saints.

Practice of St. Paulinus to bury the dead near the tombs of the Saints—He asks St. Augustine to explain the reason of it—The Saint replies that the survivors are moved to pray more earnestly for the intercession of the Saints, who certainly hear and assist, though the manner of their hearing is a mystery he cannot explain—The epitaph of St. Paulinus on Cynegius.

St. Paulinus asks his opinion as to the advantage of burying the dead near the Saints.

The treatise of St. Augustine, *De Curâ pro Mortuis Gerendâ*, was written about A.D. 421. St. Paulinus of Nola had written to him, saying that a certain widow had pressed him to allow her son Cynegius to be buried in the Church of St. Felix; and that he had consented to her petition, thinking that these desires of pious souls could not be altogether foolish (*non esse inanes motus animorum religiosorum et fidelium pro suis ista curantium*); that it was, in fact, one mode of asking for the help of the Saints, &c. He had himself buried his own infant son near the tomb of martyrs (Justus and Pastor) in Alcala, and commended himself and his wife Therasia to his prayers, which he probably thought would have more power if united to those of the martyrs.

[1] Lib. Pontif., ed. Migne, tom. ii. p. 1426.
[2] Ed. Bianchini, Part i. p. 418, No. 603.

Quem Complutensi mandavimus urbe, propinquis
Conjunctum tumuli fœdere Martyribus.
—(*De Obit. Celsi pueri.* Poem. xxxii.)

Now, however, he asks St. Augustine whether he considers that it profits a man's soul that his body should be buried after death near to the shrine of some Saint (*apud sancti alicujus memoriam*).

St. Augustine answers, first, that there are many whom it does not profit at all, viz., those whose lives were so good that they need no such help, and those who were so bad that they cannot be benefited by it. Next, he quotes 2 Macch. xii. 43, and adds, that even if this had not been written in the Old Scriptures, the authority of the Church would have been of no small weight in this matter, which always provides that the recommendation of the faithful departed should have its place among the prayers which the priest pours forth to God at His altar. Then he enters into the *rationale* of the thing, and says, quoting St. Matt. x. 28–30, that even the absence of any burial at all cannot bring any real loss to the soul; that all that concerns a funeral is more for the consolation of the survivors than the good of the deceased; nevertheless, that it is a part of religion to respect the bodies of the dead, which have been the instruments and temples of the Holy Ghost; and that if it be an act of religion to bury the dead, the choice of a place for the burial can hardly be altogether indifferent. He conceives the benefit of being buried near the shrine of a Saint to be this: that, when we call to mind the place of our friend's burial, the memory of the Saint near whom he lies necessarily comes also to our mind, and so we recommend him to the Saint's prayers, that being received by him as by a patron he may be helped by his prayers with God; but without those prayers of ours he does not think the place would be of much use. (*Adjuvat defuncti spiritum, non mortui corporis locus, sed ex loci memoriâ vivus* [*matris*, or *precantis*] *affectus.*) The Church prays for all who have died in the communion of the Catholic Church, under a general commemoration, without any mention of names, that those who have no children or parents, friends or relatives, to perform this work of piety in their behalf may receive it at the hands of the Church as the common mother of us all.

St. Augustine in his answer distinguishes between different classes of the dead.

When any benefit accrues, it comes from the prayers of the survivors addressed to the Saint.

"*How* the martyrs help men is a question," he says, "which passes the powers of my understanding. Nevertheless, that they do so is certain. Whether they themselves are present by virtue of their own power at one and the same time in so many different and distant places, either at their shrines, or wherever else they are felt to be present; or whether they remain in a place suited to their deserts, far removed from all converse with mortal

How the martyrs hear and help men is a mystery. The fact is certain.

things, yet praying in general for all the needs of their petitioners (just as we pray for the dead, to whom, nevertheless, we are not present, and we neither know where they are nor what they do), and Almighty God, who is everywhere present, neither confounded and made one with us, nor yet removed to a distance from us, hearing their prayers, gives these consolations to those to whom He thinks it right to bestow them amid the miseries of this life, by means of the ministry of angels everywhere dispersed, and thus, by His wonderful and ineffable power and goodness, commends the merits of His martyrs wherever He pleases, when He pleases, and as He pleases, but especially by means of their shrines, because He knows it to be expedient to us for the building up of our faith in Christ, for confessing Whom they have suffered—This is a matter higher than I can reach, more abstruse than I can penetrate; and therefore I dare not define which of these two it is, or whether both perchance may be true, viz., that these things sometimes happen by means of the very presence of the martyrs themselves, sometimes by means of angels assuming their persons. I would rather inquire of those who know; for some one perhaps may know, though not he who seems to himself to know and is really ignorant; for they are the gifts of God, who gives some things to some men, and others to others, according to the testimony of the Apostle (1 Cor. xii. 7–11)."

Other testimonies on the same subject.

After this full and explicit discussion of the question by the great Doctor of the West, it is hardly necessary to quote any other witnesses. The reader, however, who desires it, will find similar testimony in St. Ambrose's sermon on the death of his brother, and in his epitaph upon him; in a sermon of St. Maximus of Turin, Hom. lxxxi. p. 263, ed. 1784, and in several epitaphs collected by Le Blant, *Inscriptions Chrétiennes de la Gaule*, &c., tom. i. pp. 396, 471, ii. p. 219. St. Maximus speaks of it as an ancient custom. "It has been provided by our ancestors," he says, "that we should associate (*sociemus*) our bodies with the bones of the Saints." The epitaph of Cynegius was clearly written by St. Paulinus himself, probably after he had received St. Augustine's answer to his inquiry. A very considerable portion of it was still in existence at Nola in the sixteenth century, and was seen by Holstein. It was seen in the last century, but with many more letters defaced, by Marini (*Papiri Diplomatici*, p. 244). Mommsen, however, states that it is no longer to be found (*Inscr. Reg. Neap.* 2075). See also Ramondini, *Storia Ecclesiastica di Nola*, i. 512, iii. 34. We subjoin a copy of it, with De Rossi's conjectural supplements of the missing portions, which we have printed in italics.

ILLUM NUNC FELICIS HABET DOMUS ALTA BEATI
*ATQUE ITA PER LO*NGOS SUSCEPTUM POSSIDET ANNOS.
*PATRONUS PLA*CITO LETATUR IN HOSPITE FELIX,
*SIC PROTECT*US ERIT JUVENIS SUB JUDICE CHRISTO,
*CUM TUBA TERRI*BILIS SONITU CONCUSSERIT ORBEM,
*EXCITÆQUE ANI*MÆ RURSUM IN SUA VASA REDIBUNT,
FELICI MERITO HIC SOCIABITUR ANTE TRIBUNAL.

"The lofty house (or Church) of Blessed Felix now has him, and will possess him, thus received, through long years. The patron Felix rejoices in the well-pleasing guest, and the young man will be thus protected before Christ the Judge, when the terrible trumpet shall have shaken the world by its sound, and the souls summoned forth will return again to their vessels (bodies). He shall be associated with the well-deserving Felix before the judgment-seat."

This is not the way in which this idea is ordinarily expressed. Generally the patronage of the martyrs is spoken of with reference to the present state of the soul, not the future resurrection and judgment.

Note E (page 228).

POSITIVE DATES BELONGING TO THE SUBTERRANEAN CEMETERY OF ST. CALLIXTUS.

A.D.

197–222. Pontificates of Zephyrinus and Callixtus.
236. Epitaph of Anteros, Pope.
250. Epitaph of Fabian, Pope.
252. Epitaph of Cornelius, Pope.
253. Epitaph of Lucius, Pope.
268 *or* 279. Epitaph of Marcianus. See *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 10.
283. Epitaph of Eutychianus, Pope.
290. Epitaph of Vibius Fimus. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 16.
296. Epitaph of Caius, Pope. See "*Epitaphs of the Catacombs*," p. 52.
296–303. Inscription of the Deacon Severus. See *Plate XI.* and p. 350.
300. Epitaph of a child near the above. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 1127.
307. Epitaph described by De Rossi, *R. S.*, iii. 225.
310 *or a little after*. Burial of Eusebius, Pope.

321. Fragment of epitaph with consular date. *R. S.*, ii. tav., xlv. 64.
343. Epitaph of Januaria. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 71.
353. Epitaph described *R. S.*, ii. 360.
358. Epitaph of Euplia, *deposita in pace sub Liberio.* See "*Epitaphs of the Catacombs*," p. 115.
360. Epitaph of Januaria. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 142.
362. Two epitaphs. *R. S.*, ii. tav. xlv. 65, and iii. p. 230.
362. Epitaph of Felix. *R. S.*, iii. 231.
364. Epitaph of Laurentius. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 1323.
366. Epitaph of Agapen. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 188.
367. Epitaph of Julia. *R. S.*, iii. 269.
373. Epitaph of Ursus. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 235.
374. *Graffito* described *R. S.*, iii. 269.
375. Epitaph of Aper. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 248.
376. Fragments of epitaphs. *Inscr. Christ.*, Nos. 254 and 259, also *R. S.*, iii. 269.
377. Epitaph of Faustinus. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 264.
378. Epitaph of Titiana. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 278.
380 *circa.* Fragment of epitaph. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 1151.
381. Fragment of epitaph. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 308.
383. Epitaph of Ticira. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 323.
389. Epitaph of Adeodatus. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 379.
392. Epitaph of Alcianus. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 399, also No. 409.
394. Fragment. *R. S.*, iii. 157.
395. Epitaph of Amantia. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 423.
396. Epitaph of Asella. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 440.
397. Epitaph of Bonifatia. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 452, also No. 457.
398. Epitaph of the Virgin Crescentia. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 460.
400. Epitaph of Vincentius. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 484.
401. Epitaph of the Virgin Pretiosa. *Inscr. Christ.*, No. 497.
406. *circa. Graffito* round a *loculus. Inscr. Christ.*, No. 571.
407. Epitaph: ☧ PRICIPIA IN PACE HONORIO VII. C. *R. S.*, iii. 383.

Note F (page 360).

Origin and History of the Pallium.

Some explain the pallium as representing the lost sheep borne on the shoulders of the Bishop as a Good Shepherd—Others explain it by the practice of famous teachers of old, both heathen and Christian, giving their cloak to be worn by that disciple who was to be hereafter the head of the School—This practice prevailed at Alexandria and in other Eastern Churches, to denote the succession of Bishops—Circumstances attending the blessing and giving of the pallium, and its significance as indicating a special share in the jurisdiction of the Apostolic See, make it probable that it originally represented the cloak of St. Peter, worn by his successors.

Pallium marked with a figure of the Good Shepherd, and intended to represent this.

Now, and for many ages past, the *pallium* has only crosses upon it. Formerly, the Good Shepherd seems to have been represented upon it; and St. Isidore of Pelusia (Lib. i. *Epist.* 136, *ad Herm.*) gives this explanation of its origin. He speaks of it as an ornament worn on the shoulders of bishops, ὠμοφόριον, made not of linen, but of wool, to denote the wandering sheep whom the Lord went in quest of and brought home on His shoulders. The Bishop wears it, he says, to show to all the people by his very dress that he fulfils the office of Christ, the Good Shepherd. Baronius (*ad Ann.* 216) and many authors of weight adopt this explanation of it. (See Martigny's *Étude Archeologique sur l'Agneau et le Bon Pasteur*, p. 63.)

Another explanation.

Another and very probable account of it is given by Monsignor Vespasiani in a learned treatise, *De Pallii Origine*, published in Rome in 1856.

The cloak of famous teachers worn by their successors,

He observes that the scholars of the most famous heathen philosophers used to adopt the dress as well as the principles of their masters, and that the handing on of the mantle or upper garment of the master served to designate his legitimate successor. Among the early Christians also, a certain religious meaning and value was attached to the wearing the mantle of any great saint or doctor, as though a more intimate and immediate communion were thereby established with the original owner of the mantle. Thus, the great St. Athanasius gave his to St. Antony; and when St. Paul, the hermit of Egypt, prayed St. Antony to bring it to his cell, and to wrap his body in it for burial, St. Antony took the hermit's mantle from off his shoulders, and ever afterwards wore it on all great occasions of

solemnity. When St. Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople, was habited in the episcopal vestments, we read that "they reverently put on him the venerable cloak of St. James, the brother of our Lord, which had lately been brought from Jerusalem, and which Ignatius received with the same respect and veneration as though he had recognised in it its former apostolic owner."

and considered a proof of their succession, among Bishops in the East.

But other examples are still more important as involving the principle of succession to office by him to whom the mantle was transferred. Thus, we read that Metrophanes, who occupied the See of Byzantium in the time of Constantine, took off his *pallium*, and laid it on the altar, charging that it should be preserved and delivered to his successor. And still more distinctly, Liberatus the Deacon, in his history of the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies, testifies to it as an essential part of the ceremony of consecrating and enthroning the Patriarchs of Alexandria. "It is the custom at Alexandria," he says, "for him who succeeds to the deceased Bishop, to keep a vigil by the corpse of the deceased, to lay the dead man's hand upon his own head, and then, having buried him with his own hands, to take the *pallium* of St. Mark and to place it on his own neck, after which he is held legitimately to occupy his place." Thus, the *pallium*, or mantle of St. Mark, was religiously handed on from one of his successors to another in the See of Alexandria, and its possession was accounted an important token of the legitimate possession of that dignity and office.

The *pallium* probably the cloak of St. Peter.

The origin of the Roman *pallium* may have been precisely the same. The oldest writers agree in referring its first use to the immediate successor of St. Peter, and say that it implied the possession of plenary jurisdiction, *i.e.*, of succession to the jurisdiction enjoyed by St. Peter. Moreover, it has always been described, and is still described, as *pallium de corpore Sti. Petri.* It is always blessed on the feast of his martyrdom,—the very day, that is, on which its first transfer was made, if not materially, yet morally,—and at the lower altar of "the Confession," *i.e.*, at the Apostle's tomb. It used to remain there for one night, and then to be preserved in a small chest over the Apostle's chair; but since that relic was enclosed in bronze and elevated to its present position, the *pallium* remains at the tomb. It is always assumed by each successive Pontiff at the altar above that tomb, and used to be delivered to archbishops or their procurators, only at the same place.

Circumstances which seem to confirm this conjecture.

When it was conferred upon any one, it was always given as to a person holding the place of the Pope for the time being, acting as his deputy and representative within certain limits. Thus, Pope Vigilius sends it to Auxanius, holding the See of Arles, as a fitting ornament to one "acting in *our stead.*" Pelagius sends it to another occupant of the same See, as "our vicar." St. Gregory the Great sends it to many, but the same condition is always implied, and generally expressed.

The theory that it was an Imperial ornament, granted to the Pope by the Emperors, is quite untenable. See *Dissertatio Historico-Canonico-Publica de Pallio,* authore J. Casparo Barthel, 1753.

Note G (page 361).

THE TOMBS OF MARTYRS CHRISTIAN ALTARS.

Testimony of St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, and others, that Mass was said on the tombs of the martyrs—Afterwards on the tombs of Saints who had not been martyrs—Traces of this in the present Ordo Missæ, and in the Ritual for the consecration of an altar—Ancient testimonies to the doctrine of the Christian sacrifice—Words used by ancient writers for the Christian altar.

St. Jerome (*c. Vigilant.,* viii. vol. ii. § 394, ed. Vallars) speaks of the Bishop of Rome as "offering sacrifices to the Lord over the venerable bones of Peter and Paul, and considering their tombs to be the altars of Christ; and not only the bishop of one city, but the bishops of the whole world" observe the same rules, which (he says) is an error if the doctrine of Vigilantius is true. St. Ambrose (*Epist.* xxii. 15) says that "he had intended to be buried under the altar himself, because he thought it was fitting that the priest should be laid to rest where he had been accustomed to offer the holy sacrifice whilst alive; but he yields the place to the martyrs (Gervasius and Protasius, whose relics had just been discovered), for it is due to them, since those triumphant victims ought to be where Christ is the victim; only He who died for all lies *upon* the altar, they who were redeemed by His Passion lie *below* it." Prudentius (*Peristeph.* iii. *in fin.*) speaks of "venerating the bones of the virgin martyr Eulalia at Barcelona, and the altar placed over her bones." Of St. Vincent at Valenza he says (v. 515), that "the altar gives to his blessed bones the

Mass said over the tombs of the martyrs.

St. Jerome.

St. Ambrose.

Prudentius.

rest that is their due; for that, being placed under the holy place, and buried under the depths of the altar, they drink in the breath of the heavenly gift [that is offered on the altar]." And of St. Hippolytus in Rome (xi. 175), that "the same table (*mensa*) is the giver of the sacrament, and the faithful guardian of the martyr."

Also over the tombs of Saints not martyrs.

St. Martin of Tours is said to have been the first Saint, *not a martyr*, whose tomb became an altar.[1] When altars were multiplied in churches, it was a rule universally observed that the altar must contain some relics, and there still remain many indications of the ancient practice in the prayers and ceremonies of the Liturgy. The prayer in the Mass immediately after the *Confiteor*, when first the priest goes up to the altar, contains these words: "We beseech Thee by the merits of the Saints whose relics are here"—"Oramus Te per merita sanctorum *quorum reliquiæ hic sunt*"—and the priest kisses the altar. Moreover, the little recess in the altar-stone, in which these relics are placed, is called the *sepulcrum*, in manifest allusion, as it would appear, to the ancient practice of which we have been speaking; and the act of depositing the relics in this *sepulcrum* is so essential a part of the consecration of an altar, that should they by any accident be removed or lost, it is not sufficient to replace them by others,—the whole altar must be consecrated afresh, unless some special leave to the contrary be obtained.[2]

Traces of this practice in the present *Ordo Missæ*,

and in the consecration of an altar.

The details of the prayers and ceremonies appointed for the consecration of an altar, and especially for this portion of it, recall in the most striking manner the burial of the saints and martyrs of old. The bodies of the dead were often carried to the cemetery in which they were to be deposited on the eve before the day of burial; and so, in like manner, the relics about to be placed in the *sepulcrum* of an altar are brought to the church on the previous evening, in some vessel prepared and blessed for the purpose. Three grains of incense are enclosed in the same vessel with them, like the spices and perfumes with which the bodies of the saints were so frequently buried; and ecclesiastics keep watch before them all night, reciting the office of the Saint whose relics they are. Then, in the office of Consecration the next day, these relics are carried in solemn procession, and among the hymns and prayers used on the occasion,

[1] Greppo, "Dissertations sur l'Histoire du Culte des Reliques," p. 16.
[2] Gardellini, "Decreta Authentica," 5043, 5081.

the vision of St. John (Apoc. vi. 10) holds a conspicuous place. Finally, the consecrating bishop closes the sepulchre, and secures it with mortar, in the very same way in which the *fossors* formerly closed tombs in the Catacombs. The *rapprochement* between these two functions cannot be accidental. It is clearly the result of an unbroken tradition. It prevails in the Greek Church as well as the Roman.

Doctrine of the Christian sacrifice in writings of Tertullian, Hippolytus, &c.

It has been pretended by some writers that the doctrine of the Church underwent some change when the *arcosolia*, or tombs of the martyrs, became also altars for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. It has even been recently asserted that none of the Fathers before St. Cyprian knew anything of a sacrifice in which, or an altar on which, the Body of Christ was offered. Dr. Döllinger, however, has shown in his commentary on the *Philosophumena*, that Hippolytus, who lived before St. Cyprian, clearly taught this same doctrine, and that the same may be said also of many Greek Fathers who lived immediately after St. Cyprian, and who certainly did not borrow their doctrine from the Latin writings of the Bishop of Carthage. The earlier Greek Fathers, indeed, avoided the expressions which were in use as designating Pagan altars. They either spoke of "the holy table," or they used the word that had been introduced to designate the Jewish altar, which also was quite unknown to the Greeks. They did not use βωμός or ἐσχάρα but θυσιαστήριον. It is not till a Constitution of the Emperors Theodosius II. and Valentinian in the fifth century, that the first of these words is used in speaking of a Christian altar. The Christians of the Latin Church, on the contrary, had no hesitation in designating their altars by the names *ara* and *altare*, though they had been hitherto used in a Pagan sense. In fact, the expression "holy table," would have conveyed the same meaning to the Latin-speaking heathens as the word *ara*. When the Christians were reproached by the heathens for having no temples or altars like other religions and nations, they admitted the charge in the sense in which the heathens used those terms, and with good reason. Nevertheless, Origen speaks of the altars to be met with in Christian churches; and although Cæcilius, in Minucius Felix, speaks of Christians having no public altars visible to the Pagans, yet St. Cyprian gives the Pagan Demetrius clearly to understand that they had their altars *in secret*. Compare also the language of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews (xiii. 10), "We have an altar whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle;" also,

Names used for the altar.

"My altar," and "the table of the Lord" in Mal. i. 7, with "the table of the Lord" in 1 Cor. x. 21.

The learned Protestant, Dr. Grabe, is an unexceptionable witness on this point, and we may conclude our remarks in his words:—

"It is certain that Irenæus and all those Fathers whose writings we have, whether contemporaries of the Apostles or immediately succeeding them, held the Holy Eucharist for the sacrifice of the New Law, and offered on the altar, to God the Father, bread and wine as sacred gifts, before consecration, as the firstfruits of creatures in recognition of His supreme dominion over all things; but after consecration, as the mystic body and blood of Christ, to represent His bloody offering of His personal body and blood upon the cross, and to obtain the benefits of His death for all for whom it is offered. And this doctrine and practice was not the private opinion of a particular church or teacher, but was the public doctrine and practice of the universal church, which she had received from the Apostles, and the Apostles had been taught and had received from Christ Himself. This Irenæus teaches distinctly, and before him Justin Martyr, whose words, with those of St. Ignatius, Tertullian, Cyprian, and others, it is not necessary to quote at length. It is enough to adduce the undoubtedly genuine words of one alone; those of Clement of Rome, from his Epistle to the Corinthians." [Dr. Grabe here cites the sections, 40–44 of the epistle, and continues,] "Now, since the author of this epistle appears to be that same Clement whose name, St. Paul writes to the Philippians (iv. 3), was written in the book of life, and since he wrote the words quoted two or three years after the martyrdom of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and twenty years before the death of St. John, scarcely any room is left for doubting that this doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice emanated from the Apostles themselves, and is therefore certainly to be held, even though no authority for it could be brought from the writings of the Prophets or Apostles. . . . With all my heart I subscribe to the opinion of Joseph Mede, and wish that after many pious and learned men of the Protestant party have clearly recognised this error of Luther and Calvin, and acknowledged the true doctrine of the Apostolic Church, they would call back into use also her most holy liturgical formularies, wrongly proscribed by those men and their contemporaries, by which this said sacrifice is offered to God, and that they would duly render this supreme honour to the divine Majesty."[1]

[1] Grabe, *Adnotat. in Iren.*, l. iv. c. 32.

APPENDIX II.

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Note A* (pages 166, 234).

The Chair of St. Peter.

The Chair of St. Peter in the Vatican not the same as that venerated in the Cœmeterium Ostrianum — The Vatican Chair recently exposed — Description of it—Its parts and ornamentation—Its origin—Historical notices of it—The two Feasts of St. Peter's Chair.

In our account of the Catacombs of the first century we have described the Cœmeterium Ostrianum, in which Signor Armellini has recently identified the chapel where was once venerated "the Chair where Peter the Apostle first sat"[1]—*Sedes ubi prius sedit Petrus Apostolus.* The Hieronymian Martyrology marks January 18 as "*Dedicatio cathedræ S. Petri apostoli, qua primum Romæ sedit.*" This same day is marked as the Feast of St. Peter's Chair at Rome in the Martyrologies of Ado and Bede, and in other ancient records, and it is never said *ubi primus* or *prior*, but always the adverb *prius* or *primum*, so that the reference is evidently not to the line of Roman Pontiffs of whom he was the first, but to some other chair in which he afterwards sat. All ancient authors record two journeys of the Apostle to Rome, one in the time of Claudius, and another in the reign of Nero; and these two journeys afford an easy explanation of his having had two well-remembered places of abode, and two chairs treasured up with affection and veneration by his children in the Gospel. All trace of the chair from which the Abbot John brought the *olea* to Queen Theodolinda has now disappeared, but another Chair of St. Peter is still preserved in the Vatican Basilica, and we propose to supplement our notice of the chair that is lost by an account of the venerable relic that still exists.

[1] See pages 116–120.

Every one knows the magnificent monument of gilded bronze erected by Bernini over the altar at the extremity of the tribune of St. Peter's. The four Latin and Greek doctors of the Church support a gigantic seat about 16 feet in height, within which is enclosed an ancient chair affirmed by Roman tradition to have been actually used by the Prince of the Apostles. Among the Essays of the late Cardinal Wiseman is a learned and interesting paper, which exposes the absurdity of Lady Morgan's amusing blunder in confusing this venerable relic with an ancient chair at Venice, and so pretending that on the Chair of St. Peter was to be found the Mussulman formula. The Cardinal, however, was obliged to be content with descriptions and drawings of the true chair which were two hundred years old, as the relic had never been seen by man since Alexander VII. had placed it in its present position. Commendatore De Rossi has been more fortunate; for, at the eighteen hundredth anniversary of the martyrdom of the Apostles, in 1867, Pope Pius IX. commanded this venerable relic to be exposed for the veneration of the faithful, and full opportunities were given for a close and scientific examination of it from every point of view. De Rossi published a full account of it in the *Bullettino* for May and June, 1867, and P. Garrucci has stated his views upon the subject in a letter to M. Wylie, Esq., F.S.A. These observations are reprinted in a publication issued by the Society of Antiquaries,[1] in which Mr. Alexander Nesbitt completes an account by the late Mr. Ashpitel of a drawing by Carlo Fontana of St. Peter's Chair now in the Royal Library at Windsor. This drawing is reproduced in facsimile, and supplemented by facsimiles of Scardovelli's drawings in the Sacristy of St. Peter's, in which the ivories are much more accurately represented than in Fontana's very inexact sketch. We shall follow De Rossi in his description of the chair, noticing P. Garrucci's observations and those of Mr. Nesbitt as we proceed. The woodcut given here is carefully copied from a photograph taken during the exposition of the chair, and will assist our readers in following the description of it which we proceed to give.

The real chair has been recently exposed.

I.—DESCRIPTION OF THE CHAIR.

It is composed of two kinds of wood.

The chair is about 4 feet 9 inches high, and 2 feet 10 inches wide. The depth from the front to the back is about 2 feet 2

[1] "Two Memoirs on St. Peter's Chair Preserved at Rome," by Arthur Ashpitel, Esq., and Alexander Nesbitt, Esq., F.S.A., imperial folio, 1870.

inches, while the seat is about 2 feet 1½ inches from the ground. The seat itself is gone. The chair has four solid legs composed of yellow oak, united by horizontal bars of the same material. In these legs are fixed the iron rings which make the whole a *sella gestatoria*, such as that in which the Sovereign Pontiff is now carried on state occasions, and such as those which the Roman senators began to use in the time of Claudius. The

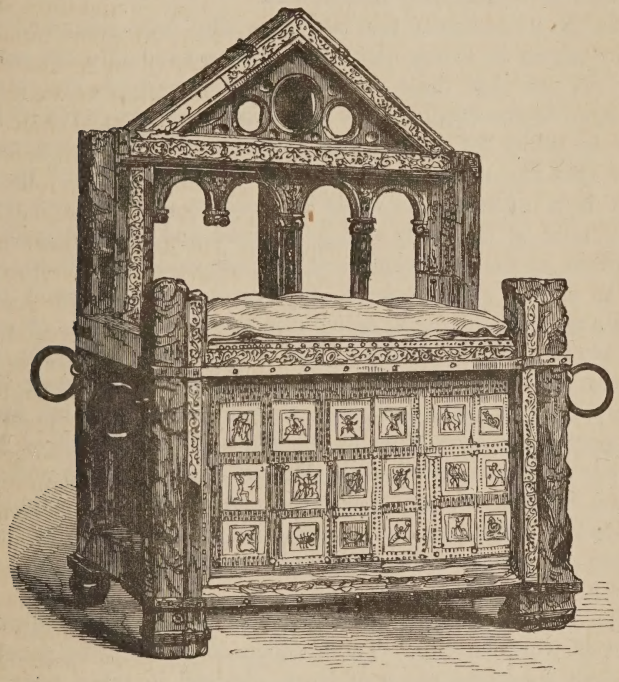

FIG. 54.—*Chair of St. Peter.*

four oak legs were evidently once square, but they are much eaten away by age, and have also had pieces cut from them as relics. These time-worn portions have been strengthened and rendered more ornamental by pieces of dark acacia wood,[1] which form the whole interior part of the chair, and which appear to have hardly suffered at all from the same causes which have so altered the appearance of the oak legs. The panels of the front and sides, and the row of arches with the

[1] Mr. Nesbitt points out that this must be the Egyptian *mimosa nilotica*, and not our *robinia pseudo-acacia*.

tympanum above them, which forms the back, are also composed of this wood. But the most remarkable circumstance about these two different kinds of material is, that all the ivory ornaments which cover the front and back of the chair are attached to the acacia portions alone, and never to the parts composed of oak. Thus the oak framework, with its rings, appears to be of quite a distinct antiquity from that of the acacia portions with their ivory decorations.

Mr. Nesbitt admits that all those who have described the chair "agree in saying that the rings are fixed into the oaken portions, and that these are worm-eaten, decayed, and much damaged by the cutting off of fragments to serve as relics;" but then he adds, "The drawings and descriptions make it quite clear that the oaken parts are additions to the chair" (p. 6). This is a mistake; for while it is easy to account for a venerable relic of antiquity being adorned and strengthened by additions of greater beauty and intrinsic value than itself, it is not so easy to account for a chair composed of a wood that shows no signs of decay being disfigured by additions of rude woodwork already decayed and worm-eaten. Perhaps the shortest explanation of the matter would be to suppose that there were two chairs each with a history of its own, but fitted into each other some time in the ninth century. Indeed Mr. Nesbitt suggests that when the Vatican Basilica was plundered by the Saracens in A.D. 846, "the earlier chair was probably stripped of whatever rich decorations it may have had, and broken to pieces amid the wreck and devastation of the church."

Ornamented with ivories, also of two kinds.

The ivory ornaments themselves, again, are of two distinct kinds of workmanship. Those which cover the front panel of the chair are square plates of ivory, disposed in three rows, six in a row. The two upper rows have the Labours of Hercules engraved upon them, with thin *laminæ* of gold let into the lines of the engraving. The six lower plates have figures probably intended for constellations. Some of them are put on upside down, and their present use is evidently not that for which they were originally intended. The other ivories, on the contrary, fit exactly the portions of acacia which they cover, with the architecture of which they correspond, and they appear to have been made on purpose, and never to have been used for ornamenting any other article. They consist of bands of ivory, not engraved, but sculptured in relief, and represent combats of

beasts, centaurs, and men; and in the middle of the horizontal bar of the tympanum is a figure of a crowned emperor, holding in his right hand a sceptre which is broken, and in his left a globe; he has a moustache, but no beard, and De Rossi conjectures he may be intended for Charlemagne or one of his successors. Garrucci speaks of it as a portrait of Charles the Bald. Two angels, one on either side, offer him crowns, and two others bear palms. The style of the carving and of the arabesques corresponds to the age of Charlemagne. The Labours of Hercules are of a much more ancient date, but De Rossi does not think them as old as the first century. Mr. Nesbitt says, "They are no doubt Byzantine, and probably date from the eleventh century." In this date he agrees with P. Garrucci.

Mr. Nesbitt gives many learned reasons to support his hypothesis that the main portion of the chair, *i.e.*, the acacia additions, was originally an imperial throne of Byzantine manufacture. We know that several of the marks of dignity with which the Sovereign Pontiffs are surrounded, such as the *flabella*, have an Oriental origin; and there is no difficulty in supposing that an imperial throne was sent by the Byzantine Emperor to one of the Popes of the ninth century, and that its amalgamation with the Chair of St. Peter rendered it a more fitting symbol of the authority of the Pope. Cardinal Wiseman adopted the theory that this chair had once been the ivory curule-chair of the Senator Pudens. But, though the more precise examination of it that has taken place in our day prevents our accepting this hypothesis, yet archæological criticism by no means contradicts the traditional antiquity of the oak framework of the chair. The mythological figures on the ivories need not surprise us. At the time when the inner part of acacia was added, and adorned with bands of ivory, the ancient ivories which cover the front appear to have been put on, and it is not at all uncommon to meet with copies of the Gospels, reliquaries, and other valuable works of the early mediæval period, which are ornamented with ivories representing subjects of Pagan mythology. At that time Paganism was dead in Europe, and its treasures of art were transferred to innocent and often to sacred uses; but when the struggle between the infant Church and the dominant power of heathen idolatry was still raging, the Christians were extremely cautious in their admission of scenes of Pagan mythology, and would not have been likely to allow them to remain undefaced on so

sacred an object as the Chair of St. Peter. On the other hand, all that the Cardinal urges as to the introduction of the use of the *sella gestatoria* by the senators, precisely in the reign of Claudius, is most valuable, as showing what was regarded in those days as a special honour, and therefore one antecedently probable to have been conferred by a convert of senatorial rank upon the Chief Pastor of the Church, to whom, in the words of the "Liber Pontificalis," "the chair was delivered or committed by our Lord Jesus Christ."[1]

2.—HISTORICAL NOTICES OF ST. PETER'S CHAIR.

Cathedra Petri used in a literal sense

In order to prove satisfactorily from historical sources that the relic now venerated as the Chair of St. Peter was so regarded from the earliest ages of the Roman Church, it will be necessary not only to trace a chain of testimonies up to apostolic or quasi-apostolic times to the *cathedra Petri*, but also to produce good evidence that the expression *cathedra* or *sedes Petri* is to be understood not merely in a metaphorical and moral, but also in a literal and physical sense. For instance, when we read in the pages of Bede[2] that Ceadwalla, king of the West Saxons, converted by St. Wilfrid, went to Rome to be baptized, and died there A.D. 689, and that Pope Sergius I. put up in St. Peter's an epitaph which stated—

> "King Ceadwalla, the powerful in war, for love of God left all, that he might visit and see Peter and Peter's Chair, and humbly receive from his font the cleansing waters,"

we might reasonably think that as "Peter" is put metaphorically for his successor Pope Sergius, so "Peter's Chair" might not improbably be a metaphorical expression for Rome, the seat of his jurisdiction; and hence we could not from such passages as this conclude that any certain reference was intended to a visible material chair, such as that of which we have given a description.

by Ennodius, A.D. 500.

Our first authority, then, shall be one who leaves us in no doubt upon this point. Ennodius of Pavia, who flourished at the end of the fifth and beginning of the sixth centuries, introduces Rome as rejoicing in having become Christian, and

[1] "Hic [Clemens] ex præcepto Beati Petri suscepit Ecclesiam, et Pontificatum gubernandum, sicut ei fuerat a Domino Jesu Christo cathedra tradita, vel commissa."—*Lib. Pont.*, c. iv.

[2] H. E., v. 8.

puts into her mouth the following words: "*Ecce nunc ad gestatoriam sellam apostolicæ confessionis uda mittunt limina candidatos; et uberibus gaudio exactore fletibus collata Dei beneficio dona geminantur.*"[1] "See now the dripping thresholds send forth the white-robed [neophytes] to the *sella gestatoria* of the Apostle's Confession; and amid floods of joyous tears the gifts conferred by the kindness of God are doubled," *i.e.*, in the two Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. In this passage Ennodius brings vividly before us the scene presented by the Baptistery of the Vatican, when the newly baptized, with joyful emotion, passed at once from the font to receive Confirmation from the Bishop seated in the *sella gestatoria*, which appears to have been then a conspicuous object at St. Peter's shrine.

This passage is illustrated by some lines from the Codex of Verdun, a fragment of the fourth or fifth century— Inscription in Baptistery.

"*Istic insontes cælesti flumine lotas*
Pastoris Summi dextera signat oves.
Huc undis generate veni quo Sanctus ad unum
Spiritus ut capias te sua dona vocat."

"In this place the right hand of the Chief Pastor seals the innocent sheep who have been washed in the heavenly stream. O thou who hast been born again in the waters, come to that one place whither the Holy Ghost calls thee to receive His gifts."

The lines preceding these in the same Codex were written at the entrance of the Baptistery—

"*Sumite perpetuam sancto de gurgite vitam*
Cursus hic est fidei, mors ubi sola perit.
Roborat hic animos divino fonte lavacrum,
Et dum membra madent, mens solidatur aquis.
Auxit apostolicæ geminatum sedis honorem
Christus et ad cælos hunc dedit esse viam:
Nam cui siderei commisit limina regni
Hic habet in templis altera claustra poli."

"From this sacred font draw everlasting life; for this is the stream of faith in which death alone is destroyed. Here the washing in the font of God gives strength to souls, and while the limbs are moistened, the mind is made strong by the waters. Christ has added double honour to the Chair of the Apostle, and given him to be the way to heaven; for he to whom He committed the portals of the kingdom above has here in the churches another gate of heaven."

From these lines we gather that the Baptistery of the Vatican

[1] Apolog. pro Synodo, *apud* Sismond., Opp. tom. i. p. 1647.

in which they were inscribed, was "an honour doubled by Christ to Peter, and to the Chair of the Apostle," and that there was in that Baptistery a distinct place where the neophytes were sealed and enriched with the gifts of the Holy Ghost by the hand of the Supreme Pastor. Now, comparing this with the passage of Ennodius, we perceive that the *sedes apostolica* is not mentioned only in its moral, but also in its literal and material sense; and that in the fifth century at least there was solemnly preserved in the Baptistery of the Vatican a *sella gestatoria*, upon which, or in front of which, the Pope used to sit when he conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation.

By St. Damasus in fourth century;

A remarkable testimony to the same fact is the evident allusion to it in the inscription which St. Damasus put up in this Baptistery which he had built—

"Una Petri sedes unum verumque lavacrum."

Again, in the inscription on the tomb of the immediate successor of Damasus, we read that Pope Siricius—

"Fonte sacro magnus meruit sedere sacerdos."[1]

Now, the usual place for the Bishop's throne was in the *apse* of the Basilica, and therefore if it is recorded that Siricius "was counted worthy to sit as High Priest at the Sacred Font," it is clear that "in the Sacred Font," *i.e.*, in the Baptistery, was placed the chair to which the Bishop of Rome owed his pre-eminent rank as the *Sacerdos Magnus;* and, in fact, the magnificent Baptistery of St. Damasus is described by Prudentius as "the Apostolic Chair."

With these authorities to guide us, we read the epitaph of Ceadwalla in an entirely new light, and we cannot doubt that the "Chair of Peter" which he is described as leaving home to see, was none other than the famous *sella gestatoria* which the Saxon king could not fail to visit when he received the sacrament of regeneration in "Peter's Font."

and St. Optatus.

Our next authority shall be St. Optatus of Milevis, who published the first edition of his work against the Donatists during the pontificate of St. Damasus, and the second during that of St. Siricius. The Donatists boasted of having in Rome

[1] Gruter, Inscr., pp. 1163, 10, and 1171, 16.

a Bishop of their sect. Optatus opposed to them the line of Roman Pontiffs from Peter to Damasus and to Siricius, "all occupiers," as he pointed out, "of the same chair;" and proceeded—"In fact, if Macrobius" (the Donatist Bishop) "be asked where he sits in Rome, can he say, In the Chair of Peter?" (*in cathedra Petri*) "which I am not aware that he has ever seen with his eyes, and to whose shrine he, as a schismatic, has not approached."[1] The chair, therefore, on which Damasus and afterwards Siricius sat as Pontiffs was in the time of St. Optatus regarded not only morally but materially as the Chair of St. Peter, and was seen by the eyes of those who approached *ad Petri memoriam, i.e.,* to his Basilica on the Vatican.

Now, it is impossible that this chair could have been so generally regarded in the fourth century as having belonged to the Apostle St. Peter and his successors, unless there had been at the time an ancient tradition to that effect. Before St. Damasus placed it in the Baptistery of the Vatican, it must have been preserved elsewhere, perhaps in the very Crypt of St. Peter's Tomb, or in the Basilica of Constantine. At any rate, before the Diocletian persecution, and in the course of the third century, Catholics professed, in the presence of heretics who did not attempt to deny it, the same tradition which St. Optatus opposed to the Donatists concerning the chair in which the successors of St. Peter presided over the Church. This comes out with striking clearness in the Poem against Marcion usually appended to the works of Tertullian, and which from internal evidence clearly belongs to the third century. Towards the end of Book iii., this ancient author enumerates the Bishops of Rome, and commences the list with these lines:—

> "*Hac cathedra, Petrus, qua sederat ipse, locatum*
> *Maxima Roma Linum primum considere jussit.*"

"In this chair, in which Peter himself had sat, he ordained Linus first to sit with him [as bishop] established in Great Rome."[2]

These words certainly suggest the idea of a material chair,

[1] St. Optat. ad Parmen., ii. 4.

[2] Thus Oehler's punctuation renders it, and thus it is given in the metrical translation of the *Ante-Nicene Library*, "Writings of Tertullian," vol. iii. p. 357. The laws of prosody are no guide in determining the case of words in compositions of this date. Witness the epitaph of Severus in p. 350.

and this literal sense becomes still more certain when we recall the language of St. Optatus and Ennodius. In fact, with the light thrown upon the expression *cathedra Petri* by the passages of those authors, it is impossible to avoid observing, that in many of the works of the early Fathers in which that expression occurs, its force is immensely increased if we suppose them to have used it with a full knowledge that the very Chair of the Apostle was preserved in Rome as the visible witness to, and symbol of, the apostolic foundation of her line of Pontiffs.

St. Cyprian. Thus, when St. Cyprian wrote of the Roman See being vacant by the martyrdom of St. Fabian, "*cum locus Fabiani, id est locus Petri et gradus cathedræ sacerdotalis vacaret*,"[1] the force of the expression is greatly increased if we understand him to have had in view the venerable chair "in which Peter himself had sat," and on which his successors, down to St. Fabian, were enthroned.

Tertullian. The celebrated passage of Tertullian, *De Præscript.*, c. 36, loses much of its significance if we regard him as ignorant of the existence of this venerable relic. He invites all heretics to test their doctrines by the living tradition of the Apostolic Churches: "*Percurre ecclesias apostolicas, apud quas ipsæ adhuc cathedræ apostolorum suis locis præsident. . . . Si Italiæ adjaces, habes Romam.*" "Go through the Apostolic Churches, where the very chairs of the Apostles still preside in their places. . . . If you are near Italy, you have Rome." The Church of Jerusalem preserved the *ipsa cathedra* of St. James;[2] Alexandria venerated the *ipsa cathedra* of St. Mark;[3] and Tertullian's long residence in Rome must have familiarised him with the *ipsa cathedra* "in which Peter himself had sat."

Another passage of the same work of Tertullian states: "*Romanorum* [*ecclesia*] *Clementem a Petro ordinatum edit.*" "The Church of the Romans proclaims Clement to have been ordained by Peter."[4] Yet the ancient catalogues place both Linus and Cletus before Clement. At any rate, this passage of Tertullian shows the antiquity of the account afterwards inserted in the "Liber Pontificalis," that Linus and Cletus had governed the Roman Church while the Apostles were living, and that Clement had been ordained by Peter himself as his successor, and had been enthroned by him in his own chair.

[1] Epist. 59.
[2] Euseb., H. E. vii. 19, 32.
[3] Vales. *in ibid.*
[4] C. 32.

This tradition forms the subject of one of the frescoes recently brought to light by Father Mullooly in the subterranean Church of San Clemente. It is true that a full account of it is found in the apocryphal Clementines, but it does not therefore follow that the whole story is fabulous, for these pages abound in examples of valuable historical truths having been buried under a mass of doubtful and sometimes fictitious stories. St. Clement ordained by St. Peter.

We have now traced up the testimonies to this celebrated relic, from the fifth century to the age when men were living who had conversed with the contemporaries of the Apostles themselves. All this time it was regarded by Christians in various parts of the world as the very pledge and symbol of apostolic succession and of true dogmatic teaching. It was the object of a festival, celebrated alike by St. Ambrose at Milan and St. Augustine in Africa; and the relic itself was deposited by St. Damasus in the Basilica of the Vatican, where it remained throughout the fifth and at the beginning of the sixth centuries: and there is every probability that it is directly alluded to in the epitaph of Ceadwalla at the close of the seventh century. Pope Adrian I. (772–779) made a richly ornamented marble repository for its reception. During the Middle Ages the mention of it becomes merely incidental, principally in accounts of the enthronisations of the Pope, and in liturgical books; so that instead of this Chair of St. Peter having been an invention of the credulity of the barbarous ages, it barely maintained, during those ages, the veneration paid to it from apostolic times, and was never adduced, as in earlier days, as an important weapon for the confusion of heretics. We learn from incidental notices, that every year, on the 22nd of February, it used to be solemnly carried to the high altar of St. Peter's, and that the Pope was then seated in it. The historians of the Vatican relate that it was translated from one chapel of the Basilica to another, until Alexander VII., two centuries ago, enclosed it in the bronze monument, where it remained concealed from the eyes of all until the summer of 1867. It is impossible, or, to say the least, in the highest degree improbable, that a new chair could have been surreptitiously substituted for that mentioned by Ennodius, and placed by St. Damasus in the Vatican Baptistery. The *sella gestatoria* exposed for veneration in 1867 corresponds exactly with Ennodius' description, for the rings which render it *gestatoria* are fixed in a portion clearly distinguishable from the more modern additions to the chair; Summary of evidence to the identity of the chair.

wherefore we conclude that, from a historical and archæological point of view, we are justified in regarding as true the venerable title which a living tradition has never failed to give to the Chair of St. Peter.

It is obvious that if we reversed the order of these ancient testimonies, and started, as Mr. Nesbitt does, with the hypothesis that the term *cathedra Petri* was merely figurative, we should not come to any incontrovertible proof of the existence of a Chair of St. Peter venerated by the faithful before the time of Ennodius. But, remembering the fact of another Chair of St. Peter venerated in the *Cœmeterium Ostrianum*, we are justified in assuming that the chair in the Vatican, described by Ennodius in the sixth century, was then very ancient, and as we go back to earlier times, we are not without warrant in applying to it expressions which, taken by themselves, are quite capable of a figurative meaning. We may add that Mr. Nesbitt's paper contains much valuable information which will repay the reader who wishes to pursue the subject further.

3.—THE TWO FEASTS OF ST. PETER'S CHAIR.

Feast of January 18.

The establishment of the Roman Church by St. Peter as the perpetual seat of his divinely-received primacy was never disputed until the sixteenth century, when the straits to which the clear teaching of Holy Scripture and the Fathers reduced Protestant controversialists impelled some of the more unscrupulous of them boldly to assert that St. Peter was never at Rome at all, that he never made it the seat of his apostolic jurisdiction, and never watered with his blood the foundations of that long line of Pontiffs whose history is the history of Christianity. "It was," says the Abbé Guèranger, "in order to nullify, by the authority of the Liturgy, this strange pretension of Protestants, that Pope Paul IV., in 1558, restored the ancient Feast of St. Peter's Chair at Rome, and fixed it on the 18th of January. For many centuries the Church had not solemnised the mystery of the Pontificate of the Prince of the Apostles on any distinct feast, but had made the single feast of February 22nd serve for both the *Chair at Antioch* and the *Chair at Rome*. From that time forward the 22nd of February has been kept for the *Chair at Antioch*, which was the first occupied by the Apostle."[1] And in fact all the Martyrologies from the eighth century downwards mark that day as "*cathedra Petri*

Feast of February 22.

[1] "Liturgical Year." Christmas, vol. ii. p. 331. Jan. 18. Duffy, 1868.

in Antiochia," or "*apud Antiochiam,*" or "*qua sedit apud Antiochiam.*" De Rossi, however, observes that ancient documents, anterior to the eighth century, make no allusion to Antioch in connection with the feast of February 22nd. Thus the Gregorian Liturgy simply marks that day as "*cathedra S. Petri,*"[1] and in one MS. of that book it is expressly added *in Roma.* In the times of St. Leo the Great this day was celebrated in the Vatican Basilica with a large concourse of bishops, and was called "*dies Apostoli;*" while in the Bucherian Calendar, which marks the greater feasts of the Roman Church restored after the Diocletian persecution, we find it noted as "*natale Petri de cathedra.*" The sermon attributed to St. Augustine on this festival makes no mention of Antioch, but states, "The institution of to-day's solemnity received from our forefathers the name of the chair (*cathedræ*), because Peter, the first of the Apostles, is said to have received on this day the chair of the episcopate. Rightly, therefore, do the churches venerate the feast of that see (*sedis*) which the Apostle undertook for the salvation of the churches."[2] St. Ambrose, in his sermon for this feast, merely expounds the Gospel without any allusion to the special object of the festival. Ptolemæus Silvius, in the fifth century, registers the Feast of St. Peter as on the 22nd of February; and the Gothic-Gallican sacramentary assigns to the same day a Mass, the collect of which begins, "O God, who on this day didst give blessed Peter to be after Thyself the head of the Church," &c.[3] The same Mass, however, in the later edition of this sacramentary, reformed in the eighth century, was transferred to the 18th of January.[4]

February 22, St. Peter's Primacy.

We gather from these authorities that an ancient tradition existed in the Church that the famous words, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock," &c., were addressed by our Lord to His chief Apostle in the month of February, and that the 22nd of that month was especially dedicated to the celebration of the institution of the primacy of St. Peter, and that in Rome this festival was made still more marked by the solemn enthronisation of the supreme Pontiff in the very chair which the Apostle himself had once used. This is confirmed by the words of the

[1] S. Greg. Magn., Opp. iii. p. 311, ed. Maur.

[2] S. Aug., Serm. 15, De Sanctis. Allusion is made to the *feralia.* See p. 60.

[3] Mabillon, Liturgia Gallicana, p. 226. "Deus qui *hodierna die* beatum Petrum post te dedisti caput ecclesiæ, cum te ille vere confessus sit et a te digne prælatus sit," &c.

[4] Ibid., p. 121.

Gothic Liturgy, which declare: "God committed the keys of heaven to a man compacted of the earth . . . and set on high the throne of the supreme See. The episcopal chair of blessed Peter, this day exposed [for veneration] is the witness."[1] It is equally clear that there is no mention of Antioch, as connected with this feast, until the eighth century. Two difficulties, however, remain to be cleared up, viz., How did the idea of Antioch become connected with the feast of February 22nd? and also, How did the Feast of St. Peter's Chair in Rome, on the 18th of January, find its way into the Martyrologies of the eighth and ninth centuries?

January 18, his coming to Rome.

The latter question appears to be satisfactorily answered by the supposition of the chair which, we have shown, was venerated at the Cemetery of Ostrianus. This chair did not, indeed, like that in the Vatican, symbolise St. Peter's primacy, but it did symbolise his first coming to Rome, whatever may have determined the particular day on which that chair was venerated. The other question it is impossible to determine with any certainty, but the suggestion of De Rossi commends itself as probable, viz., that the copyist of the ancient Roman Calendar, finding the 18th of January marked as "*cathedra S. Petri qua primum Romæ sedit*," and not understanding why another Feast of St. Peter's Chair at Rome should be kept on February 22nd, inserted the words "*apud Antiochiam*" in order to explain the anomaly. The Feast of St. Thecla, with the title of *discipula Pauli Apostoli*, who went to Antioch in Pisidia to hear St. Paul, and a certain St. Gallus, a martyr of Antioch, being celebrated on the same day, may have led to the insertion of the word which has perplexed so many antiquarians, and which receives no explanation from any records of the Church of Antioch which have come down to us.[2]

[1] Mabillon, *l. c.*, p. 298.

[2] Mr. Wright has lately published a valuable Syriac Martyrology of the fourth century, from a MS. of the year 412, in which the martyrdom "in the city of Rome of Paul the Apostle, and of Simon Peter, the Prince of the Apostles," is commemorated on the 28th of December ("Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Records" for January 1869). St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Sophronius of Jerusalem assign the same date to the festival of the two Apostles.

Note B* (page 300).

Personal History of St. Callixtus.

The "Philosophumena" of Hippolytus—Its history of St. Callixtus justly liable to suspicion—The same history told by De Rossi and others—Its omissions supplied—Charges against Callixtus on the score of doctrine and discipline examined in detail—Some facts and conjectures about Hippolytus—The memory of St. Callixtus held in special veneration in the Church of Rome from the earliest times.

The name of Callixtus being so indelibly impressed on the chief of the Roman Catacombs, our volume would be too incomplete if we did not say something about his personal history, as described in the "*Philosophumena*," a very ancient work, discovered in 1842, and first published in 1859, from a MS. of the fourteenth century. We cannot, of course, enter into the disputed question as to the authorship of this work; neither need we discuss in detail the doubts which have been raised as to the authenticity of the particular part of the work with which we are most concerned. We shall accept the opinion, towards which the weight of authority certainly inclines, that the whole of the volume is from the pen of Hippolytus, a man of vast learning, the disciple of St. Irenæus, and a contemporary of Callixtus. Everything, therefore, which it says about that Pontiff deserves the most serious consideration.

The "*Philosophumena*" of Hippolytus.

The story which he tells is this: that Callixtus was the slave of Carpophorus, a Christian of Cæsar's household; placed by him over a bank which he opened in the populous quarter of the *Piscina publica;* that he was unfortunate in the management of this business, and attempted to escape from the importunity of the creditors and the wrath of his master by going on board a ship about to sail from the harbour of Porto. Carpophorus, however, overtakes him; Callixtus jumps overboard, is caught and brought back to Rome, where he is subjected to the severe and degrading punishment of the *pistrinum,* or hand-mill. Some of the faithful make intercession in his behalf, that he may be allowed to collect certain monies which he pretends to be

Its history of St. Callixtus, both before

owing to him, and which would at least restore to them a portion of what they have lost by the failure of the bank. The pretence, however, is altogether false; and being now too closely watched to make a second attempt at flight, Callixtus courts martyrdom by making a riot in the Jewish synagogue. He is brought before the Prefect on the charge of being a Christian; and though Carpophorus denies this charge on behalf of his slave, Callixtus himself acknowledges it, is scourged, and banished to the mines of Sardinia. After a while, Marcia, concubine (or morganatic wife) of Commodus, persuades the Emperor to recall the Christian exiles. She obtains a list of them from the Pope (Victor), who purposely omits the name of Callixtus; yet he manages to coax the officer intrusted with the execution of this charitable commission into allowing him to return with the rest. Victor is very sorry to see him, and sends him out of the way to Antium, where, however, he allows him a monthly pension. On the death of Victor, Pope Zephyrinus loads him with honours and dignities, to his own damage; he uses him as a coadjutor in the government of the clergy, and "sets him over the cemetery." Callixtus obtains great influence over Zephyrinus, who is represented as a very incompetent and covetous man; and on the death of that Pope he succeeds him.

and during his Pontificate,

The writer of the "*Philosophumena*" then goes on to describe, with the same undisguised malignity, some of the acts of his Pontificate: first, with reference to his treatment of Sabellius and his exposition of Catholic doctrine, in which he accuses him of having acted "through fear of me" (the writer), and "of having set up for himself a school against the Church;" and then with reference to ecclesiastical discipline, in which Callixtus is represented as erring grievously on the side of laxity, whereby large numbers were attracted "to his school, some of them having been cast out of the Church by me after judicial sentence."

may justly be suspected.

This sketch will suffice to show the general character of the history of Callixtus contained in this volume, and the *animus* of the writer. He acknowledges that Callixtus had censured him for erroneous doctrine; Callixtus is evidently the centre round which all his interest turns; he cites no authorities for his statements, but is himself his own witness, and bore a large share in the disputes which he describes. True criticism,

therefore, no less than natural equity, requires that we should not yield a blind assent to so partial a statement. Yet there is no reason to suspect that the history is a mere fable: more probably it is a libel in which truth and fiction are maliciously interwoven; the facts may be true, but they may have been misinterpreted, attributed to false motives, and other important facts omitted. Indeed, on the very face of it, the story is imperfect and inconsistent with itself: a certain amount of exaggeration, misinterpretation, and suppression is obvious. Learned men, therefore, of various schools of theology, have sought to supply the deficiencies, and to reconstruct the history on another basis. Amongst these we are naturally led to look with the greatest favour upon that of De Rossi, who has treated it with his usual skill and impartiality in successive numbers of the "*Bullettino*" in the year 1866. We proceed to give a short abstract of those articles, especially with reference to those parts of the history which he is able to illustrate from archæological sources.

The same story told differently by De Rossi and others.

And first, as to the servile condition of Callixtus, he observes that the "*Liber Pontificalis*" states that he was a son of one Domitius, who lived in Trastevere. It is possible that this man may have been a freedman of the Gens Domitia, and his son may still have remained a slave; and it is a curious coincidence that the very name "Callistus Domitiorum" is found stamped on certain tiles of the beginning of the second century. It is barely possible that this tile-maker may have been the father of the Pope. If freed, his name would have been Domitius Callixtus; and if his sons had not been freed, they would have belonged to the patrimony of Marcus Aurelius; or they might have been freed, and their titles would have been "M. Aurel. Augg. Liberti." And there is extant an inscription of a certain Carpophorus beginning in this very way. It seems highly probable that this is a monument or epitaph of the Carpophorus of our story.

The story of the bank and of its failure may be literally true, and yet reflect no discredit on Callixtus; indeed, the author of the narrative in the "*Philosophumena*" does not commit himself to any direct imputation of dishonesty in this matter. But he represents him as having first run away, then attempted suicide by drowning, and finally sought for martyrdom by creating a

disturbance in a Jewish synagogue. On this last count of the indictment, De Rossi calls attention to the state of the law at this time, which we have given in page 90, and which would certainly have prevented any Jew from bringing his adversary before the tribunals on the sole charge of professing the Christian religion. On the other hand, nothing was more natural than that Callixtus during his management of the bank should have had dealings with the Jews, and that he should have sought to meet some of his debtors on their way to or from the synagogue. "The Jews"—we quote now from Plummer's translation of Döllinger's work on the subject (p. 111)—"thought that they had an easy game with a believer, who had the threefold ill-luck of being a slave, penniless, and a Christian; at once they made the fact of his having dunned his debtors on a Sabbath, and in front of or in the synagogue, into a charge of an attack on their religious liberty, and hence, instead of paying him, they beat and abused him, and hurried him before the tribunal of Fuscianus, the Prefect of the city. . . . He is scourged as a punishment for disturbing the worship of the Jews, and is then sent as a Christian to the mines in Sardinia."

But, as he had not been distinctly arraigned before the judges as a Christian, and the fact had only (as we suppose) come out in the course of the trial, his name did not appear on the official list sent from Rome through the kind offices of Marcia. On the other hand, the facts of his case being well known in Sardinia, the officer releases him with the rest, relying on Marcia's influence to hold him indemnified. Perhaps it was owing to some difficulty arising out of the irregularity of his release that he was sent to reside at Antium for a while. It can hardly have been from any personal ill-will on the part of the Pope, else why did he assign to him a monthly pension?

And here occurs a great gap in the biographical sketch of Callixtus, as drawn by Hippolytus. This bankrupt banker, runaway slave, and escaped convict, whom the Pope desires to keep out of sight and at a distance from Rome, all at once reappears on the scene as the principal officer of the next Pope in the government of the clergy, and is then unanimously elected as his successor; we say unanimously, because if there had been any serious opposition, the writer of this libel would certainly not have failed to mention it. And this last fact shows

not only that Callixtus enjoyed the confidence of Pope Zephyrinus, who had made him his Archdeacon, but also that in his discharge of the important duties attached to that office he had commanded the esteem of the whole body of the Roman clergy.

False doctrine attributed to Callixtus, and changes in ecclesiastical discipline.

It has been already mentioned that the author of this libel charges Callixtus with having used different language after his elevation to the Pontificate from what he had used before, with reference to the heresy of Sabellius, whom he condemned, and that he upbraided Hippolytus himself with being a Ditheist. We shall not enter, however, into the question of doctrine. The accusations which relate to ecclesiastical discipline fall more within the range of a student of archæology.

The first of these concerns the forgiveness of sins—that this was granted to all, even to the most heinous offenders. It is interesting to observe that Callixtus is accused of defending his practice in this matter by an appeal to some of the figures and parables in Holy Writ. "He said that the parable of the Tares was spoken with reference to this—'Let the tares grow together with the wheat;' *i.e.*, let sinners remain in the Church. Besides, he said that the ark of Noe was made for a figure of the Church, and that in it were dogs and wolves and ravens, and all clean things and unclean; affirming that it must be so in the Church. As many passages for this purpose as he was able to collect, he expounded in this manner." This tallies exactly with what Tertullian tells us either of Callixtus or of his immediate predecessor, that in his sermon on occasion of reconciling an adulterer to the Church, "like a good shepherd and blessed Pope, he brings in all the allurements of mercy that he can find, and seeks for his goats in the parable of the Sheep;" and furthermore, that St. Callixtus "caused the image of the Good Shepherd to be painted on the glass chalices" in protest against rigorism: to which we may add the well-known passage, wherein the same writer protests with such fierce indignation against the peremptory decree which he hears has come forth—"The *Pontifex Maximus*—that is, the Bishop of Bishops—declares, 'I remit the sins of adultery and fornication to those who have done penance.'"

We pass over other more obscure counts of the indictment of relaxation in ecclesiastical discipline, and will only mention the last, that he permitted women to marry any one whom they

might choose as a consort, whether a slave or free, and to live with them as their husbands, though they were not lawfully married. Here again Tertullian comes to our aid, and tells us that it was a part of Montanist rigorism not to recognise what he calls *occultæ conjunctiones*, or secret marriages, which existed among Catholics. He is probably referring to the same thing as Hippolytus; and the substance of the matter is this, that the Church, by the mouth of her Chief Bishop, recognised the validity of marriages which the laws of the State would disallow. The Roman law greatly restricted the circle from which a noble maiden might take a husband. "In this, as in so many other things, the Holy See caused its voice to be heard in favour of liberty long in advance of the civil power." The writer before us, however, alleges that the fruits of marriages of this kind were often made away with before they were born; and then he exclaims in conclusion, "Behold to what impiety this lawless person proceeded, teaching adultery and murder at the same time! And yet after all these enormities these men are lost to all sense of shame, and presume to call themselves a Catholic Church"—that is to say, these were the doctrines and discipline of the Catholic Church, against which the author of the "*Philosophumena*" protested and set himself up at the head of a sect in open antagonism.

Some facts and conjectures about Hippolytus.

It is certain that Hippolytus was a Bishop, and from the stately phraseology which he adopts, it has been very plausibly conjectured that he even claimed to be the Bishop of Rome; for he speaks of himself (in the plural number) as "the successors of the Apostles, the partakers of the same grace, supreme priesthood and doctorship, and the guardians of the Church." Eusebius and St. Jerome tell us they were not able to ascertain of what Church Hippolytus had been Bishop. In several MSS. of his works he is called "Bishop of Rome," and from some Oriental writers also he receives the same title. The learned De Smedt, now one of the Bollandists, conjectures that the magnificent statue and chair of Hippolytus, discovered in 1551 near the Basilica of *S. Lorenzo fuori le mura*, and now preserved in the Christian Museum at the Lateran, was executed and set up in rivalry against the chair of the Prince of the Apostles, the symbol of Catholic unity.* But this is a question we cannot

[1] *Dissertationes Selectæ in Primam Ætatem Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ.* Auctore

now enter upon. We must hurry on to the death of Callixtus and his posthumous fame.

Hippolytus makes no mention of this. He begins his story by saying that "he suffered martyrdom," or "confessed the faith" (ἐμαρτύρησεν), "under Fuscianus, Prefect of Rome, and that the manner of his confession (or martyrdom) was as follows;" and then he tells the tale, which has already been examined, of his apprehension by the Jews and his exile to Sardinia. It is certain, however, that this exile, followed by a long life as Archdeacon and Pope, would not have been sufficient to obtain for him the title of martyr; and yet we learn from the testimony of all the Martyrologies that he was thus honoured from the earliest times, and not even the severest critic has ever called this fact in question. Indeed, it is easy to show that his name enjoyed a singular pre-eminence in the veneration of the faithful. In the old *Feriale* of the Roman Church, so often referred to in our pages, and described in pp. 19, 20, the list of the days of burial of all the Popes is given from Pontianus to Silvester; one only is preserved of an earlier date, and that is of Callixtus. The fact that the name of Callixtus has always remained inseparably attached to the cemetery on the Appian Road is another indication of the same kind. The cemetery was not of his foundation, neither was he buried in it. He was set over its administration by Zephyrinus, and both that Pope and thirteen of his successors—some of them very celebrated martyrs—found their last resting-place in it; yet all through the succeeding centuries, when the names of the martyrs gradually superseded those of the founders of the cemeteries, not one of these martyrs ever took the place of Callixtus. On the other hand, it happened quite contrariwise to the Cemetery of Calepodius, on the Via Aurelia. Callixtus was buried in it, and his name at once eclipsed that of Calepodius, even at a time when the original nomenclature of the Catacombs was generally maintained, so that in the oldest calendar we constantly read of the Cemetery of Callixtus on the Via Aurelia, by way of distinguishing it from the other on the Via Appia.

Callixtus highly venerated from the earliest times.

Again, within the walls of the city, the name of Callixtus

P. C. de Smedt, S.J., Ghent, 1876. There is a very interesting summary of the learned professor's statements and arguments in the "Month" of February and March 1878.

was always retained by those places which were in any way illustrated by his history; and the memory of no Bishop of Rome in the early ages is perpetuated by so many monuments and topographical memorials. We learn from the collar of a runaway slave, belonging to the time of Constantine, that there was a *piazza* in Rome known as the *Area Callisti*, and there can be no doubt that it is the place which still retains the same name in front of the Basilica of Sta. Maria in Trastevere, the traditional scene of his martyrdom; for a contemporary writer describes that Basilica as having been built by Pope Julius (A.D. 337-352) *trans Tiberim Regione III. juxta Callistum.* The same Pope built another church over the tomb of Callixtus on the Via Aurelia, and was himself buried there. And these special honours paid by Julius to the memory of Callixtus are very significant, when taken in connection with the charge brought against him that he had at one time espoused the errors of Sabellianism; for in the days of Julius the cause of Sabellius was much discussed, and his followers had both a place of worship and a cemetery of their own in Rome (see "Epitaphs of the Catacombs," p. 102). His condemnation was quoted in a letter of the Eastern Bishops to this Pope; and it was this same Pope who received the great Athanasius and defended him against the Arianising party. It is natural, therefore, to conclude that Julius delighted to honour the memory of Callixtus as a distinguished enemy of Sabellianism, not its patron. One trace only of the calumnious charges against the orthodoxy of the Pope by Hippolytus is to be found outside the pages of his own work—viz., in certain documents of the end of the fifth century, which speak of a Callixtus, a heretic of the school of Arius, Photinus, and Sabellius, and condemned with them. Before the publication of the "*Philosophumena*," nothing whatever was known about this person. Now, however, we can hardly doubt that the insertion of the name was the result of an historical blunder, which owed its origin to this very book. Theodoret, writing in the fifth century, seems manifestly to have had no knowledge of the "*Philosophumena*," excepting its tenth book, in which the name of Callixtus appears as having added to the Sabellian heresy, but without any indication of his ecclesiastical dignity. He therefore inserted his name among his list of heretical teachers, and in this he was followed by later writers; so that

the real Callixtus, Pope and condemner of Sabellius, but accused of Sabellianism by one who had himself run into the opposite error, became multiplied into two persons, the Bishop and the heretic. We have already intimated that many learned men are of opinion that there has been a similar multiplication of Hippolytus; that the schismatical and heretical writer of the libel we have been examining is no other than the great Doctor of whom Dr. Newman says that "he stood in point of authority, range of subject, and ability, in the very first rank of theologians in ante-Nicene times, and perhaps has no rival at all, as a theologian, during that period, except his master, S. Irenæus." Dr. Newman thinks it simply incredible that a name so singularly honoured and so warmly cherished at Rome by Popes of the fourth, fifth, and seventh centuries should belong to the author of this malignant libel on his contemporary Popes.[1] Others, however, believe that this outbreak of temper was only the result of his temporary rebellion against authority, and that the fault was nobly redeemed by his subsequent repentance and martyrdom.

[1] Tracts Theological and Ecclesiastical, vol. i. p. 219.

FIG. 55.—*Gilded glass, probably from the Catacombs, now in Paris.*

Note C* (page 392).

The Catacomb of St. Alexander.

Its discovery in 1855—*Acts of St. Alexander not genuine, but founded on older and genuine documents; confirmed, in some particulars, by the recent discovery—Basilica of St. Alexander—Its monuments—Connection with an adjacent Catacomb—Certain characteristics of this Catacomb.*

Its situation.

The Cemetery of St. Alexander might have been mentioned in the second chapter of our third Book as another specimen of a Catacomb of the second century; but it lies beyond the limits which we have assigned to the Roman Catacombs properly so called (p. 2), for it is between six and seven miles from the city on the Via Nomentana. Nevertheless it is worth while to give some account of it, as it is of comparatively recent discovery, and deserves a visit. It was brought to light accidentally in the year 1855, and furnishes another example of the small Basilica connected with the burial-place of one of the early martyrs (see pages 176-182). This Basilica has been partially restored, and the whole carefully protected from profanation, by the munificence of Pope Pius IX. All that we know of its history is contained in the following particulars.

Its discovery.

Acts of St. Alexander not genuine,

It is recorded in the "*Liber Pontificalis*" that St. Alexander, who was Bishop of Rome A.D. 121-132, "was buried, where he was beheaded, on the Via Nomentana, not far from the city of Rome, at the seventh milestone." The Acts of his Martyrdom which have reached us are not in their original form; nevertheless, like those of St. Cecilia and many others (see pages 23, 461), they must have been compiled from documents or traditions which were in their substance genuine, for they serve to explain peculiarities in the recent discoveries which would otherwise have perplexed us—*e.g.*, a considerable portion of the principal altar and of the marble grating over the *con-*

but confirmed by the contents of the Basilica.

fession or tomb of the martyr has been found, and on the front of the altar occurs the following fragment of an inscription :—

. . ET ALEXANDRO DEDICATUS
VOTO POSUIT DEDICANTE EPISCOPO URSO

On studying this fragment, it is natural to inquire, first, whose name could have taken precedence of Alexander's? and secondly, how came the altar to be consecrated by one whose name does not appear in the list of the Bishops of Rome? The Acts supply answers to both these questions. First, the "*Liber Pontificalis*" tells us that, together with St. Alexander, Eventius, a priest, and Theodulus, a deacon, received the crown of martyrdom. Of Theodulus the Acts do not say much; but they describe Eventius as a priest of great age and very venerable appearance, who had conversed with some of the Apostles, and had converted large numbers to the faith—amongst others, the parents of St. Alexander. On the other hand, it is stated that Alexander was very young; indeed, the judge is made to address him as a man of about thirty, and to urge his youth as a reason why he should escape death by apostasy. We can easily understand, therefore, why the name of Eventius should have been placed before that of Alexander.

The Acts go on to say that all three martyrs were buried by a noble Roman lady on her estate at the seventh milestone on the Via Nomentana, Eventius and Alexander together, and Theodulus in another grave apart, and that a Bishop was officially appointed for this place, that the Holy Sacrifice might always be offered there. This accounts for Bishop Ursus. Moreover, in another part of the Basilica may be seen a small chapel, which, we conjecture, from its mosaic pavement and other signs of decoration, was not improbably the burial-place of some person of distinction. A fragment of an inscription found here gives us the word MARTYR; and perhaps this may have been the tomb of Theodulus.

Description of its principal features.

A number of inscriptions still remain in the pavement of the Basilica, monuments of bishops, priests, deacons, sub-deacons, and others, many of which are marked by consular dates, showing them to belong to the middle and latter half of the fifth century. On one side, a doorway leads us into the Catacomb, which, like that of Generosa (see pages 196–200), is very poor,

and of very limited extent. There are no *cubicula*, no paintings, except one or two in front of special graves, and hardly any inscriptions engraved on marble slabs. On the other hand, the galleries are interesting from the number of unopened graves, still ornamented with the small lamps which were fastened before them sixteen hundred years ago; a number of Pagan monuments also, turned upside down, or set up sideways, or otherwise testifying to their translation from other places; and several Christian inscriptions of an ancient type, rudely scratched in the mortar with which the gravestones were secured, such as

SPIRITUS TUUS IN BONO QUIESCAT.

"May thy spirit rest in good."

SAVINIANE SPIRITUS IN BONO.

"Sabinianus, (may thy) spirit be in good."

ZHCHC IN ΔEO XPICTO ΥΛΗ IN ΠΑΚΕ
CIΛΒΙΝΑ ΕΤ ΠΕΤΕ ΥΛΗ ΕΤ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟC.

"Mayest thou live in God Christ; Sylva, in peace Sylvina, and pray, Sylva and Alexander."

For the explanation of these epitaphs, and their probable date, see "Epitaphs of the Catacombs," Chapter V.

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